

Access to Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in Lesotho

By

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DECLARATION

Student Number: 36739103

I declare that the study entitled “Access to Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in Lesotho” is my own work, and that where other people’s works were used, such sources were acknowledged through complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Mosia', is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Paseka Andrew Mosia

JULY 2017

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I will always be indebted to God Almighty for the gift of life and health and for giving me the opportunity to conduct this study intended to shed light on the life experiences of students with disabilities studying at tertiary level in Lesotho, and to influence positive change in their experiences of learning at this level.

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ACRONYMS

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CSU	Computer Services Unit
DSA	Department of Students Affairs
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
EDF	Department of Educational Foundations
EFA	Education for All
FED	Faculty of Education
FOH	Faculty of Humanities
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEP	Higher Education Policy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JAWS	Job Access with Speech
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
LSL	Lesotho Sign Language
MEMO	Memorandum
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NUL	National University of Lesotho
SED	Special Education Department

SENA	Special Education Needs Assistant
SENU	Special Education Needs Unit
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America

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ABSTRACT

Overall, research covering access to education for students with disabilities is accumulating at a very slow rate, Lesotho is no exception. Such studies are important given the national and international commitments to equality and equity in education for all citizens. Access to education is based on four values which are central to inclusive education namely; presence, participation, acceptance and achievement.

This qualitative case study must be understood as an attempt to close the gap in the literature and to provide a deeper understanding with respect to access to higher education for students with disabilities. The study uses the social constructionism and social model of disability as lenses to guide the investigation. Data collection involved various methods namely, analysis of documents (policies, internal memoranda, official letters, minutes of the meetings and pictures), individual interviews and focus group discussions with staff and students with various forms of disabilities. Data was analysed through the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) which begins analysis with a single unit and builds meaning from the unit to reflect the general patterns of behaviour across units.

Findings reveal that though admission at the university is considered non-discriminatory, it is on merit bases. All students compete equally for available spaces and the identity of students with disabilities is considered irrelevant to disclose during selection of applicants. If a student with disabilities competes with students who were not exposed to similar challenges at primary and secondary levels, admission should be viewed as unfair. Additionally, Students with disabilities have limited choice of courses or programmes due to poor administration of concessions, lack of educational resources, inflexible teaching methods and curricula. This problem conflicts with the capability principle that promotes students' choice of desired functionings. Further, disability data is not used to secure either the academic or social support services for the students at the institution. Students with disabilities are excluded from the social and extracurricular activities of the university with some bullied by staff and peers alike. Finally, the support provided by SENA, year-level tutors and welfare personnel is inadequate and does not afford opportunities

for students with disabilities to participate equitably in the university's academic and social programmes.

The study concludes that access to institutions of higher education for students with disabilities in Lesotho is problematic. They remained ignored and underserved. There is a need for fundamental transformation of policies, practices and programmes to afford all students opportunities to gain admission, participate, and succeed in education.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the entire study. First, it gives a background to the study leading to a description of the research problem. Then it presents research aims and objectives, followed by research questions. It explains the rationale for conducting the study. The chapter further gives a brief explanation of the theoretical framework guiding the investigation of the study, followed by the research methods and methodology and explains the contribution the study makes to policy, practice and scholarship. The key concepts of the study are also explained. Lastly, an outline of all chapters in the thesis is provided and it concludes with a summary of key points.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Policy Context

Since the proclamation, "Everyone has the right to education", in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) 68 years ago, countries around the world have made significant strides to make education accessible to their citizens. As signatory to major United Nations (UN) treaties Lesotho, a small country landlocked by the Republic of South Africa, is bound by these commitments. For example, Lesotho ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities in 2008. The country, through the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), responded to the Education for All (EFA) commitment and other UN educational mandates by planning, among others, to improve access, quality, efficiency and equity in education and training at all levels (Ministry of Education and Training 2005:1). Access to tertiary education has been reinforced by the 4th goal of the sustainable development goals namely, "...ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," and target 4.3 reads, "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" (United Nations 2015:17).

The country has created access to education progressively from primary, secondary and tertiary education through policies and action plans of the Ministry of Education and Training. For example, at the primary level the Ministry of Education Policy Statement of 1989 outlined several objectives and one of them reads, "...to ensure that each disabled Mosotho child

completes a 7-year primary course, trains for an occupation and/or participates in technical vocational education according to his/her needs and interests” (Ministry of Education 1989). The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2005-2015 also indicates that the Special Education programme aims to facilitate integration/inclusion of students with disabilities into the “regular school system at all levels” (Ministry of Education and Training 2005:106). The plan goes further to outline clear strategies on how integration/inclusion initiatives would be implemented at primary and secondary school levels. The policy statement and sector plan use the terms integration and inclusion interchangeably as if synonymous while they are explained differently in literature. Literature cited in chapter two draws distinction between the two terms.

At tertiary level there are two notable policy developments that have potential to facilitate access at this level. First, the Higher Education Act of 2004 regulates higher education in Lesotho. Higher Education Act of 2004 also established Council on Higher Education (CHE) as a body to oversee good management of higher education institutions (Kingdom of Lesotho 2004). Secondly, promulgation of Higher Education Policy in 2013 also meant that education at tertiary level would be offered within boundaries of a policy framework as mandated by Higher Education Act of 2004 in Part II, 5(1)(a). These initiatives reinforce respect for the rights of students with disabilities studying at Higher Education Institutions. The two objectives of Higher Education Policy (HEP) with regard to access to higher education for students with disabilities are:

1. To safeguard the right of equitable access to higher education for people with disabilities; and
2. To guarantee that Lesotho lives up to its international obligations, specifically in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:36).

1.2.2 Access to Higher Education (HE)

Research on access to tertiary education indicates that participation at HE is on the rise globally. A qualitative study by Strnadova, Hajkova and Kvetonova (2015:1080) engaged 24 university students with disabilities at HE in the Czech Republic. The findings indicate that despite continued increase in number of students with disabilities in HEIs, these institutions neglect their

needs and hamper their participation. A literature study by du Plooy and Zilindile (2014:196), in describing epistemological access in South Africa, acknowledges that students from minority groups, such as persons with disabilities, are denied access by the learning environment and assessment mechanism that are not responsive to their needs. That is, gaining physical admission into a HE institution does not fully describe access to education. An extensive literature study analysing special education in the United States of America by Skrtic (1991) expands the issue of epistemological access. Skrtic (1991:169) describes how the professional and institutional practices of special education have been developed around conformity in public education, and any student who does not fit within the rigid programmes is deemed a failure.

Additionally, in a qualitative case study research conducted at one higher education institution in Cyprus Angelides, Stylianou and Gibbs (2006:514) claim that HE is conformist, traditionally built to transform individuals and not to adapt to individual needs. Transforming higher education institutions' traditional perception on disability may not come overnight because change is a slow process that is hard to come by (Fullan 2006:9). A survey by Madriaga, Hanson, Kay and Walker (2011), which critiques pervasive attitudes of normalcy at HE, engaged a total of 484 students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers as participants at one university in England. The study reveals that some academic staff and students without disabilities perceive special concessions such as giving notes to students with disabilities in alternative formats or assessing them differently as giving them unfair advantage over nondisabled peers (Madriaga et al. 2011:902). A qualitative study by Lalvani and Broderick (2013) engaged 25 graduate students to critique assumptions embedded in special and regular education. The study states that dominant discourses on disability awareness serve to build and instill oppression of people with disabilities rather than to challenge it (Lalvani & Broderick 2013:479).

All role-players are required to conform to certain behaviours deemed by majority as standard. In a literature study describing participation and equity in higher education in New Zealand, England and Australia, Leach (2013) notes that one of the reasons higher education institutions (HEIs) exclude students with disabilities is their legacy of promoting interests of a selected few and advantaged members of society. A qualitative study by Kasiram and Subrayen (2013) engaged 15 students with visual impairments at one university in South Africa to share their experiences of living with a disability at a HEI. The students revealed that it was a normal

experience for persons with visual impairment to have their capabilities, contributions and existence ignored in their school contexts (Kasiram & Subrayen 2013:68). Out of a longitudinal study, drawn from the survey to elucidate experiences of students with disabilities at four universities in the United Kingdom (UK), Riddell and Weedon (2014) argue that despite development of disability policies and funding models in the UK, many lecturers knowingly remain conservative and exclude minority groups. Thus, transformations to make HE accessible should target both universities' practices and ideology as they both act as barriers to access at HEIs (Angelides et al. 2006:514).

Morgan (2013:17) notes discrepancies in the way institutions identify students with disabilities. There is lack of legal requirement mandating students to declare their disabilities hence some students' needs are never known, and institutions use disability data, for students who have declared, inefficiently resulting in poor support. Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson and Smith, (2011) conducted a qualitative study that engaged students with disabilities, their nondisabled peers and staff at one university in New Zealand. The study indicates that despite knowing the students' needs, lecturers took time to position themselves appropriately to support the students, and they lacked technical skills to do so (Claiborne et al. 2011:525). Lastly, lecturers know little about how to support students with disabilities and some are indifferent to the students' needs or underestimate their academic potential (Madriaga et al. 2011:902).

1.2.3 Access to HE in Lesotho

An extensive literature search on access to education at tertiary level in Lesotho yielded two studies on this topic. The first study was conducted by Matlosa and Matobo (2007) at two HEIs, National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Lesotho College of Education (LCE). At NUL the study, explored access amongst students with disabilities using qualitative approach, which involved five students with visual impairments, and six members of staff of which one was blind. At LCE, the study involved an administrator and two lecturers of students with disabilities (Matlosa & Matobo 2007:196-197). The findings revealed that admission for students with visual impairment at NUL was restricted to programmes in which Mathematics and Statistics were not core courses. The Faculty of Social Sciences argued against waiving a requirement for the two core courses as that would lower standards of its programmes (Matlosa & Matobo 2007:201-202). The study also found that lecturers were not trained on how to support the

students and consequently could not diversify their teaching approaches and content. In addition, though NUL had computer resources installed with Job Access With Speech (JAWS) for students with visual impairments, only one computer had access to internet, thus denying the five students with visual impairments sufficient access to information (Matlosa & Matobo 2007:203). Both institutions had poor resources catering for the students, but NUL was comparatively better than LCE which had no computer services for the blind (Matlosa & Matobo 2007:209). Lastly, NUL had only one person employed since 1999 specifically to support students with visual impairments (Matlosa & Matobo 2007:201).

The study had some shortcomings. The authors collected data from only five students with visual impairment, thus, ignoring other forms of disabilities. The voices of students with other forms of disabilities are important if we are serious about understanding issues of access amongst students with disabilities. In citing Goffman's (1963) publication, Oliver (1996:22) highlights the significance of giving persons with disabilities opportunity to express themselves to avoid misrepresentation of their needs. Unless persons with disabilities unite and demand attention and recognition, nondisabled people will not properly perceive barriers they go through (Liggett 1988:271). Additionally, the study sourced out data from lecturers only. No efforts were made to involve support staff working with students with disabilities. Data collected from the support staff is important for strengthening the views of students with disabilities. Parents' views were not expressed verbatim but were summarised, a problem that undermines the validity of the findings. Parents' perspectives could have clarified socioeconomic impact of raising a child with disabilities and indicate barriers that have to be addressed in order to facilitate access and enhance learning for the students.

The second study conducted by Lesotho Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2012) was a survey that used a mixed-method approach to collect data in 13 institutions registered with the Council. The study assessed various issues related to how the institutions and their programmes were organised, financed and managed. The study reveals that only two types of disabilities, namely, visual impairments and physical disabilities were accommodated at two of the participating institutions. The total number of students with disabilities admitted (10), represented 0.02% of the total number of all students enrolled, and 0.09% of the population of persons with disabilities eligible for higher education. It was also noted that many existing

buildings were not accessible to mobility-challenged students as reported by 47.5% of participating institutions (CHE 2012:13). Additionally, the records kept by NUL on registered students with disabilities were found to be unreliable. Lastly, none of the institutions except the National University of Lesotho had computers fitted with JAWS software for visually impaired students (CHE 2012:14). The focus of this study was not on access to education for students with disabilities and it did not involve students with disabilities as participants. Therefore, it limits an understanding on how students with disability access education at HEIs in Lesotho.

Clearly, both studies, Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) and CHE's (2012), give a hint on barriers to access at tertiary level. The study by Council on Higher Education (2012) notes that there are physical barriers in all HEIs; and that at NUL, there is no attention given to identification of students with disabilities other than visual impairments. Both studies concur that NUL has computers installed with appropriate software for students with visual impairments. However, these studies hardly explain barriers (psychosocial or physical) that prevent the students to access tertiary education equitably. There is also no clear description of special concessions, if any, provided within the teaching and learning atmosphere. Principally, the two studies denied students with disabilities a voice; none gives the students opportunity to explain their needs for access. Additionally, both were conducted prior to enactment of HEP in 2013, and though Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) study was conducted after the passing of Higher Education Act of 2004, it did not focus on how the policy could influence access to education at tertiary level.

Challenges to access highlighted by research in Lesotho are comparable to experiences of access elsewhere. Matlosa and Matobo (2007) highlighted lecturers' concern about adapting programmes as lowering their standards; the same view was raised by Madraiga et al. (2011). Both Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) and Claiborne et al.'s (2011) studies indicate that lack of training for staff in disability awareness negatively affects access to education. Additionally, HE programmes are perceived as rigid. For example, Riddell and Weedon (2014) and Matlosa and Matobo (2007) state that HEIs they studied had limited programmes from which students with disabilities could choose.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Access to higher education remains a problem for students with disability in Lesotho. The 2006 census in Lesotho stated that 68400 people, 3.7% of the total population, were said to have a certain form of disability (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 2009:111,112). The 2006 census report indicates that only 3.6% of persons with disabilities had HE qualifications as opposed to 8.3% for their nondisabled counterparts (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 2009:115). A survey by Bureau of Statistics at the Ministry of Development Planning (2013:278) acknowledges that disability is a barrier to access beyond primary level in that “...while 15.2 percent of disabled males had secondary education, the corresponding percent for non-disabled males was 25.2 percent”. The survey showed negligible differences in attainment of primary education for all population groups but disability reduced chances of acquiring higher levels of education (Ibid). With regard to economic activity majority of persons with disabilities do not have a regular paid job compared to their nondisabled counterparts. Ministry of Development Planning (2013:285) reports that 25.3% of persons with disabilities between the ages of 15-64 have regular wage jobs compared to 53.7% for people without disabilities. In this regard, the 2011 survey presents a deteriorating scenario to 2006 census report where 27.4% persons with disabilities had regular paid jobs compared to 50.7% persons without disabilities in the same age range (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 2009:122). Given the benefits of tertiary education described under rationale of the study below, researching on access to HE for persons with disabilities is critical because acquisition of HE qualifications affects their lives positively.

The two studies conducted in Lesotho on access to higher education for students with disabilities (Matlosa & Matobo, 2007; CHE, 2012) give a glimpse of the picture about access to higher education for student with disabilities. CHE’s (2012) survey was just a scoping exercise which only provided a number of students with disabilities enrolled at HEIs and physical accessibility to buildings at these institutions. Matlosa and Matobo’s (2007) study was not underpinned by any disability theory to give clear description of how access is facilitated. Importantly, both studies were conducted prior to enactment of the Higher Education Policy, which currently mandates HEIs to be inclusive in their practices; findings of the two studies do not reflect how the tertiary institutions have changed to address the mandate of the policy enacted in 2013. This warrants a need for further investigation of the problem of access to tertiary education to

understand how practices and policies facilitate access for students with disabilities following the promulgation of Higher Education policy in 2013.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Aim

The study aims to investigate access to higher education amongst students with disabilities in Lesotho and suggest ways in which practices and policies may be improved.

1.4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To explore and describe practices and policies in place to facilitate access to higher education for students with disability in Lesotho.
- b. To describe challenges experienced by students with disabilities studying at higher education institutions in Lesotho.
- c. To suggest ways in which practices and policies may be improved to facilitate access to higher education for students with disabilities.

1.5 Research Questions

The main research question is phrased as follows:

How accessible are institutions of higher education to students with disabilities?

The sub-questions are as follows:

- a. What practices and policies are put in place to facilitate access to education for students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Lesotho?
- b. What challenges are experienced by students with disabilities studying at higher education institutions in Lesotho?
- c. How can existing practices and policies be strengthened to improve access to HEIs by students with disabilities?

1.6 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The modern day society is built on principles of equity and respect for human rights. According to Salmi and Bassett (2014:362) a society that is committed to promote equity must safeguard

access to education, including access to tertiary education, for all people. People with disabilities face their lives with “...fewer resources, just on that account, than others do. This justifies compensation, under the scheme devoted to equality of resources...” (Dworkin 1981:302). Walker (2003:172) adds that people’s “...preferences and choices are shaped and informed or deformed by society and public policies”. So equity denotes addressing the needs that come from these individual differences as Salmi and Bassett (2014:365) say that promoting equity helps students with disabilities overcome social and natural disadvantages so that circumstances beyond individuals’ control do not disadvantage them. According to Rawls (1971:6), justice is brought by “...the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation”.

Cheatham, Smith, Elliot and Friedline (2013:1078) state that post-secondary school qualifications contribute immensely to the economic and social welfare of people with disabilities. It brings notable benefits for participants such as being employable, accepting diversity and increasing personal competencies (Singh 2011:483). According to Berggren, Rowan, Bergback and Blomberg (2016:339), an acquisition of a degree by persons with disabilities ensures that they can evade poverty and have access to a paid occupation. Savage, Sellar and Gorur (2013:161) argue that education brings equity as beneficiaries have higher salaries, improved health and longevity.

The Higher Education Policy shows clear commitment of the government of Lesotho to fulfill requirements for UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:36). In adhering to the mandate of HEP to facilitate access to education, tertiary institutions can achieve mandates of both CRPD and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially, goal 4 on providing quality education which I argue is a precursor for goals 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health and wellbeing), 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 10 (Reduced inequality). The current study can be claimed to explore the extent to which the selected institution addresses the requirements of the policy to make education accessible to all.

1.7 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current research is underpinned by two theoretical perspectives, namely, the social model and the social constructionist perspective of disability. There is reciprocal causal effect between

how social systems operate and how individuals within such systems think. Therefore, social model of disability advocates systemic change while social constructionism tries to address change from the ideological perspective. Promoting access to education is in line with the social model which encourages systems to transform and accommodate individual needs of students (Engelbrecht 1999:8). In line with the social constructionist perspective, Danforth and Rhodes (1997:358) say teachers should evaluate how their professional practices have promoted notions of ability and disability as legitimate categories in education. Danforth and Rhodes (1997) recognize the need to challenge perceptions about persons with disabilities as weak and incapable. According to Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998:7,9) access to education should work in tandem with promoting skills for social inclusion, therefore it is offered within a transformed society which attempts to reduce inequalities in society and as social constructionists argue, without the disabling perceptions people have about individuals with impairments. Engelbrecht (1999:9) further notes that the social model of perceiving disability is a rights model; it treats access to education for students with disabilities as a human right issue meant to curb marginalization of people with disabilities in society.

1.8 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This section of the study presents a brief description of the research methods and methodology followed in investigating the problem posed (a detailed explanation is provided in chapter 4). I will also explain the research paradigm, design, approach and how data was gathered and analysed. This study perceives reality as socially constructed and true for people who value and believe in it (Nieuwenhuis 2007:63).

1.8.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopted Constructivist/interpretative perspective which Nieuwenhuis (2007:59) defines as seeking to understand life from how people view it themselves. The truth does not exist independent of the person or community that produces it hence the need to study informants in their social context where they act naturally. Creswell (2014:8) explains the constructivist perspective as individuals' effort to understand the world they live in and an appreciation that individuals develop personal meanings to the world endings in not just one but a complexity of views. Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006:273-274) note that interpretive

perspective denotes accepting people's lived reality as true account of life and, therefore, devising ways of capturing, without distortion, this true essence of life. This study has investigated how staff and student participants practice and experience, respectively, access to education at one university. Therefore, the use of a constructivist/interpretivist perspective has helped the researcher to assess what participants make of their world and to evaluate how his role in interacting with participants affected the outcome of the study.

1.8.2 Research Approach

The researcher chose the qualitative approach for the study. This thesis paid particular attention to data in the "form of written or spoken language, or in the form of observations that are recorded in language", and issues were studied clearly and in detail so as to make sense of various layers of messages from the data (Durrheim 2006:47). Data collection was comprehensive in nature (Laher & Botha 2012:88), covering the experiences of students with disabilities, views of staff and detailed documentation and picture analyses.

1.8.3 Research Design

I adopted a single case study design and used several data generation methods such as focus-group and individual interviews, documentation, and a scrutiny of images of the physical environment to reach an in-depth analysis (Creswell 2014:14) of how one institution in Lesotho facilitates access to education for minority students. These various data generation processes make up a single entity of the case study (Kumar 2014:155). In this regard Babbie and Mouton (2001:281) correctly point out that "...case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influence of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours". The selected public institution is the unit of analysis for this study (Babbie & Mouton 2001:281), and assessing access at this institution coincided with its critical reflection, in 2015, on offering tertiary education for the past 70 years.

1.8.4 Data Collection Methods

Data for this study was collected through a focus group discussion with key informants and semi-structured individual interviews, document and picture analysis. As naturalistic conversations between an interviewer and respondents, interviews provided rich description of practices and experiences from the respondents' perspectives (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012:133). Though pre-formulated questions were used for both focus group and individual interviews, the

questions allowed the researcher probing flexibility (Nieuwenhuis 2007:87) to follow up issues emerging from the interview. Data were also collected from documents such as reports on the development of special education, memoranda, policies on disability education etc. (Nieuwenhuis 2007:82). Silva (2012:141) states that document analysis should focus on "...the meaning of the document, the situation in which it emerges, and the importance of the interaction that results from the document". Thus, caution was taken to solicit only documents that were strategic to answering the problem of the study. Additionally, pictures from the surrounding environment that provided insight into what participants described as barriers to access were taken and described. Similarly, great care was taken to select participants that would provide relevant information to address the problem of the study as explained under sampling below.

1.8.5 Sampling Technique and Sample

At the beginning of this study, data sources which would indicate how the university facilitates access for minority groups were not known to me hence the use of purposive and information-oriented data sampling methods (Kumar 2014:155). Kumar (2014:155,244) adds that when little is known about key sources to data, such as students in different disability groups in the selected institution, snowball sampling becomes another critical technique. Few initial participants were identified by the Special Education Needs Assistant (SENA) and they in turn introduced me to other students with disabilities who were unknown to the Special Education Needs Unit. Nieuwenhuis (2007:79) opines that purposive sampling selects data sources that possess unique qualities and are critical for addressing the aim of the study. Data were collected to the point of saturation; when no new data emerged by adding a new informant (Nieuwenhuis 2007:79; Kumar 2014:245). The total sample consisted of 15 members of staff, 11 students living with disabilities, several documents such as internal memoranda requested from office of the Dean, Faculty of Education and SENAs as well as photos of buildings and the physical environment purposively shot to depict physical barriers which students with disabilities frequently mentioned.

1.8.6 Data Analysis Method

Analysis of qualitative data is an effort to understand how research participants make meaning of life by examining their perceptions, values, experiences etc. (Nieuwenhuis 2007:99). This study used interpretive phenomenological analyses as an approach most ideal for interpreting

qualitative data. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) looks at individual cases one-by-one and subsequently compares cases to identify "convergent and divergent themes" (Kawulich & Holland 2012:239). Additionally, Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008:215) note that IPA helps researchers to accurately capture participants' unique experiences as they interact with their world and also acknowledges that researchers have an "interpretive element" while interacting with research subjects.

1.8.7 Trustworthiness

Shaw (2010:182) describes trustworthiness as transparency which the researcher shows in the analysis of data. Dependability can be attained "...through rich and detailed descriptions that show how certain actions and opinions are rooted in and developed out of contextual interaction" (Van de Riet & Durrheim 2006:93-94). Clarity in describing how data for the current study was collected, verified and analyzed enables verification of findings by independent researchers. The detailed description on how data were collected and analysed provides readers with "...database for making judgments about possible transferability of findings to other milieux" (Bryman 2012:392). The researcher engaged the following data gathering techniques to ensure that the findings are credible: 1) unobtrusive measures; 2) use of multiple methods to gather data and 3) participant validation (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012:137-138). I created a safe and trusting relationship that allowed informants to give information freely while gathering data through interviews and focus group discussion. After transcribing data participants were sent their transcribed interviews to validate what they said, a process termed member check (Creswell 2014:201). Lastly, I presented the findings using no more than headings derived from data and participants' verbatim quotes to enable confirmability and to eliminate my personal biasness as a researcher (Babbie & Mouton 2001:278). In complying with ethical norms, excerpts about participants' experiences were presented using pseudonyms.

1.8.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was critical for participants to understand the purpose of the study and proceed with an understanding that participation was going to appeal to memories and experiences which could affect them emotionally. The researcher ensured that the following minimum ethical considerations (full details provided in chapter 4 - Research Methods) were met: (a) informed consent, ensuring no harm; (b) reciprocity/beneficence, and confidentiality. Besides seeking

ethical clearance from the research ethics committees of the University of South Africa the researcher sought further permission from the authorities of the sampled institution in Lesotho, and solicited informed consent from research participants themselves. Informed consent meant that informants had the right to decide whether to participate in the study and had freedom to withdraw from it when they needed to (Ogletree & Kawulich 2012:68). Hays and Singh (2012:80) argue that informants are able to make informed consent when they know the purpose of the study, what is expected from them and limits of confidentiality as well as how study results would be published.

The researcher furnished each participant with an information letter spelling out the purpose of the study and he read the letter to students with visual impairment before offering a soft copy to be accessed through JAWS. Babbie (2014:65) opines that social science research can cause psychological harm such as being upset, worrying, feeling guilty or frightened and, therefore, researchers should guard against such possibility. In ensuring no harm this study arrangements for interviews were made in the most convenient venue to the participant as far as possible. Confidentiality is another ethical consideration that protects informants from harm that might befall them by participating in a study. This study used pseudonyms and made reference to job titles for staff to avoid making explicit descriptions which could reveal true identity of respondents (Babbie 2014:68).

1.9 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study aims to make contribution to policy, practice and scholarship. Considering limited research on access to tertiary education for students with disabilities in Lesotho, this study has added great insight into how we should understand Inclusive Education at tertiary level. The findings reflect the lived experiences of students with disabilities with regard to access to HE and improve policies and practices. Policies in Lesotho are predominantly about providing access to education at primary and secondary levels with minimal focus on tertiary education. The Higher Education Policy, though it mentions that tertiary institutions must respond to the students' needs, does not provide sufficient details on how HEIs should enhance participation of the students in their studies and how the provision of access to education for the students should be funded. The study argues for an institutional disability policy that spells out in unequivocal terms what students with disabilities are entitled to and which departments provide support services.

This study provides an understanding of access to education which must address the predominant negative ideological influences and barriers to access at higher education. First, it underscores the importance of engaging students with disabilities, initially, to ascertain their needs and, periodically, to understand barriers they encounter in their learning. Second, it indicates that facilitating access to education for students with disabilities is their right and creates equity in society. Thus, it is imperative for nondisabled staff and students to accommodate students and persons with disabilities lest they infringe on their rights. On the same note, the study states that for institutions to better organise themselves to facilitate access, they should plan the support services and train staff and establish clear lines of communication between different departments of an institution. Mostly, persons with disabilities must promote their right to access because they know barriers to participation better than any professional in special education can.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Definition of key terms is provided in this study so as to avoid any ambiguities that may result from their use elsewhere. Therefore, key terms are given operational definition.

1.10.1 Access to Education

The concept of access to education in this study refers to removing physical, attitudinal and curricula barriers in order to promote equity of success for all students pursuing a programme. In describing access to tertiary education article 24(5) of Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities indicates that there should be no discrimination, participation should be “on an equal basis with others” and institutions should ensure provision of reasonable accommodations (United Nations 2008:18). In the context of Lesotho, Higher Education Policy of 2013 gives a description of how access to education should be facilitated. The following are three features of the 15 policy objectives that describe access to higher education: (a) increasing enrollment and diversification of programmes; (b) provision of equal chance for participation and success and (c) ensuring the right of equitable access to higher education for people living with disabilities (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:xv-xvi).

1.10.2 Accommodations

Accommodations are modifications in time, medium of communication etc. made on a programme to enable access.

1.10.3 Disability

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines disability as "a state of not being able to use a part of your body completely or easily; the state of not being able to learn easily" (Hornby 2005:412). In this study disability refers to three areas of impairment, namely, visual impairment including blindness, hearing impairment including deafness and physical impairment affecting mobility or ability to write. In the context of Lesotho, the Ministry of Development Planning (2013:272) uses the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Impairment, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) to guide its conceptualisation of disability as, "reduced function and activity of a person as a result of impairment."

1.10.4 Higher Education

Higher Education Act of 2004 defines HE as "a learning programme leading to qualifications higher than COSC [Cambridge Overseas School Certificate] or its equivalent" (Kingdom of Lesotho 2004:64).

1.10.5 Higher Education Institution

A Higher Education Institution is, according to Higher Education Act of 2004, any post-secondary institution which operates as a university, polytechnic or college, and has been approved by Council on Higher Education (Kingdom of Lesotho 2004:75).

1.11 PRELIMINARY OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The remaining chapters of the study will develop as follows:

Chapter Two presents the two lenses of investigation adopted by this study. These include the social model of disability and the social constructionism.

Chapter Three covers international and national policies on access to education. It also explains access to education.

Chapter Four discusses literature on access to higher education globally and ending with how access to HE is facilitated in Lesotho.

Chapter Five describes the research method and methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter Six presents the findings of the study.

Chapter Seven covers a discussion of the research findings against the literature.

Chapter Eight presents study conclusion and recommendations.

1.12 Summary of the chapter

This chapter orients the reader about international and Lesotho policy contexts which influence access to HE. It describes research on access to tertiary education and highlighted factors that affect access among which are a clear national and institutional policy contexts, training of staff and students awareness of services provided by an institution. The problem prompting further research was stated followed by stating research aim, objectives and questions. The study describes justification for carrying further research on access to HE and then two models, the social model and social constructionism were described as theoretical lenses for the study. The study explained research methods and methodology, namely, a qualitative case study and explained instruments used for data collection and analysis. Next was a description of trustworthiness of the study and ethical principles upheld in collecting and analysing data. I then described how the study contributes knowledge for policy development, practice and further research. A definition of key terms was provided before providing an outline of chapters for this study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical lenses of the study, namely: social model and social constructionism. The chapter begins by highlighting the founding principles of the lenses adopted for this study. Then it discusses critical theory as an overarching theory which binds both the social model and the social constructivist perspective together. Then, the key educational practices under the medical model are contrasted with practices in the two theoretical lenses of the study. It concludes with a brief summary of the chapter.

2.1 THEORETICAL CONTEXT

I approached this study with the belief that knowledge on disability education cannot be generated abstractly without involving people with disabilities. That is, disability agenda is incomplete without people with disability driving the agenda hence studies speaking of ‘self-defined’ needs replacing ‘ascribed needs’ (Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson & Smith 2011:514). Social systems such as schools are mandated to transform their resources for inclusion but cannot make meaningful change unless they know how their change would address the needs of people with disabilities. These are in line with the ideals of social model of disability and social constructionism.

The two models adopted for this study jointly depict the context of the problem of my study and have been used as the basis for interpretation of data and to give meaning to students’ experiences of access to education at tertiary level in Lesotho (Casanave & Li 2015:110; Green 2014:37). While the social model has a practical humanistic approach of identifying specific social barriers to learning (Shakespeare & Watson 2001:10), the social constructionists indicate part of the effort to remove barriers as advocacy for social institutions to develop policies that protect disabled people’s rights. The social model of disability advocates systemic change while social constructionist tries to address change from the ideological vantage point. In the context of this study the social model explains how higher education institutions in Lesotho need to enable change for better access; it describes inclusive or discriminatory environment as depicted by institutional policies and practices. The social constructionism explains underlying values and ideologies, which justify social practices reflected in students’ experiences of access.

One of the key issues in the social model, which states that persons with disabilities have the right to influence how and where their education should be conducted (UNESCO 1994:6), resonates with the social constructionist perspective of life. The social constructionism and social model of disability follow from the founding principles of critical theory, namely, fighting oppression of minority groups and giving such groups freedom to express their needs and wishes with regard to their education and life (Claiborne et al. 2011:514). In the following sections I will discuss the two models in details.

2.2 THE SOCIAL MODEL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVES

While the medical model of disability devalues and blames people with disabilities, both the social model and social constructionist perspective transcend individualistic perspectives to look at the context within which individuals with disabilities live and challenge disabling perceptions of people with disabilities as weak, dependent and so on. These mark positive transformations in social perception of disability and echo commitments made by international policies that protect the rights of people with disabilities. The social model and social constructionist theoretical lenses fight the domineering medical model, which sanctions the dependency and self-pity of people with disabilities (Mertens, Sullivan & Stace 2011:228). For example, the Salamanca Statement expresses this comprehensive social reform in education based on the fulfillment of human rights by stating, among others, that: (a) persons with disabilities have the right to influence how and where their education should be conducted; (b) social institutions such as schools should transform so as to accommodate people with disabilities; (c) society needs to think about the talents of people with disabilities rather than their difficulties; and (d) diversity should be accommodated and celebrated within education (UNESCO 1994:6-7). Several perspectives outlined below suggest areas of focus which the social model and social constructionist perspective should address as core barriers to an inclusive paradigm.

According to Lone and Kumar (2013:14) the following theoretical viewpoints need attention: the functional, conflict and interactional perspectives. Lone and Kumar (2013:14-15) make their analysis of the three perspectives as follows: (a). Functionalists blame individuals who have disabilities as incapable of meeting social needs and expectations and whom society should fix in order to behave normally. People with disabilities should also perceive their conditions as

undesirable. Finkelstein (1993:11-12) observes that in almost every measure of acceptable social life, persons with disabilities come out last because being normal is used as criterion to design daily activities. Disability in this context is equated with inability to function (Finkelstein 2001:2), dependency (Oliver 1993:50), unemployability (Hahn 1985:294), (b). The conflict perspective uses critical theory's concept of power dynamics in society and has greatly influenced activism against discrimination and Inequity. This perspective sees people with disabilities as victims of power relations in society where the dominant group subjects the weak to forms of oppression through education and social welfare systems (Foucault 1982). Diniz, Barbosa and dos Santos (2009:61) describe this as disablism, a condition which results from a culture of normality where those with impairments are targets of oppression and discrimination. Grenier's (2007) study states that HEIs have cultural conformism which results in reluctance to change their programmes. On the same note, both Wendell (1996:61) and Liggett (1988:265) acknowledge that knowledge production in society is discriminatory against the less powerful and, thus, should be challenged because it is not representative; (c). Interactionism is credited to Goffman (1963) who maintains that there is inequality when 'normal' and 'stigmatised' individuals interact. He describes unspoken rules of engagement which influence attitudes of superiority and inferiority between people of unequal social statures (Goffman 1963:14) and persons with stigma are perceived to be less human. Thus, this perspective examines the way people with disabilities develop identity that results from feedback about their impairments from society. They are expected to accept their impairments and resultant social disadvantage so as to adjust their efforts to fit what society expects of 'normal' individuals. It is this acceptance that Foucault (1982), Hahn (1985) and other critical theorists oppose. It is against these ills that the chosen theoretical models seek to highlight change in social structures, opportunities and worldviews for the benefit of all people.

2.2.1 The Social Model

Research indicates that people with disabilities silently endure barriers which undermine their social participation (Barnes & Mercer 2004:2-3). For example, Finkelstein (1993:11-12) asserts that normality has been used as yardstick for all social engagements such as employment and career progression, suitability of housing, access to buildings, and access to information. Neglecting the needs of people with disabilities is entrenched in discriminatory social policies and practices (Oliver 1993:50). Lack of social participation for people with disabilities

influenced the development of the social model of disability (Anastasiou & Kauffman 2013:442), which promotes their right to live independently, work and influence decisions that affect their lives (Shakespeare 2013:214).

The social model was born out of social activism and revolution by people with disabilities and their organisations to fight the established social practices in which people with impairments were ill-treated and regarded as inferior (Barnes 2013:3). The revolution is credited to Vic Finkelstein and Paul Hunt, among others, whose ideas were critical in forming the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in 1970s (Thomas 2004:571). For example, Paul Hunt notes:

The problem of disability lies not in the impairment of function and its effects on us individually, but also, more importantly, in the area of our relationship with ‘normal’ people.... Obviously we who are disabled are deeply affected by the assumption of our uselessness that surrounds us.... Normality is often put forward as the goal for people with special handicaps that we have come to accept its desirability as a dogma. What I am rejecting is society’s tendency to set up rigid standards of what is right and proper, to force the individual into a mould (Hunt 1966:1-2,4,5).

Finkelstein (2001:2) also states, “Our society is constructed by people with capabilities for people with capabilities and it is this that makes people with impairments incapable of functioning”.

In the Fundamental Principles document UPIAS argues:

In our view, it is society that disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society (UPIAS 1976:3-4).

Critical theorists’ assertion that individuals must challenge socially oppressive ideologies and practices (Bronner & Kellner 1989:2) is clearly demonstrated in the development of the social model of disability where persons living with disabilities promoted their right to access social opportunities equitably. The disability agenda was introduced in the public domain by

associations such as Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities (LNPD) (Barnes 2013:4-5; Lone & Kumar 2013:16). It is against this backdrop that I thought it proper to give students with disabilities, studying at a tertiary institution in Lesotho, platform to express how they experienced their education and to generate data that explain practices and physical contexts acting as barriers to their education.

The social model developed from the Fundamental Principles of Disability document (Oliver 2013:1024) in which UPIAS promoted the rights of people with impairment and argued for removal of social barriers (Lone & Kumar 2013:16). It is Mike Oliver who is credited for promoting the social model of disability within academic scholarship (Finkelstein 2001; Traustadottir 2009:9). In this political debate about socially oppressive practices, UPIAS conceptualized disability by drawing a distinction between impairment and disability. Disability indicates social arrangements that act as barriers for and exclude people with impairments from social participation (Mertens et al. 2011). Similarly, proponents of the social model of disability define impairment as the loss, physical or psychological, of a body function while disability is described the way society discriminates against and fails to cater for people with impairments (Anastasiou & Kauffman 2013:444-445). For example, Mertens et al. (2011:228) argue that a person using a wheelchair is disabled if buildings are inaccessible and there are no sidewalks where the wheelchair can move. The redefinition of disability by drawing the distinction between disability and impairment was also prominent in setting the social model apart from other disability theories (Shakespeare 2013:216). As a key figure in the development of the social model, Oliver (2004:21) writes:

I want to make three general points about the social model. First, it is an attempt to switch the focus away from the functional limitations of individuals with impairment on to the problems caused by disabling environments, barriers and cultures. Secondly, it refuses to see specific problems in isolation from the totality of disabling environments: hence the problem of employment does not just entail intervention in the social organization of work and the operation of the labour market but also in areas such as transport, education and culture. Thirdly, endorsement of the social model does not mean that individually based interventions in the lives of disabled people, whether they

be medical, rehabilitative, educational or employment based, are of no use or always counter-productive.

Oliver (2004) recognizes limitations brought by impairments and acknowledges support persons with disabilities currently receive. However, he argues for the need to recognize environmental barriers which exacerbate limitations brought by impairments. According to Shakespeare and Watson (2001:10) the social model notes that people with disabilities cannot access their environment and services on an equal basis as others. The exclusion is created and maintained because normality is used as a criterion for social engagement (Finkelstein 1993). Furthermore, Barton (1993:238) claims that living with an impairment results not only in social and economic hardships but also in assaults upon self-identity and emotional well-being. It is this pessimistic reality that critical theory challenges people with disabilities to oppose. The social model demands that people with disabilities "...oppose these mechanisms that articulate relations of power onto us" (Beckett & Campbell 2015:279). Therefore, social model sought to redefine what it means to have a body that is considered abnormal in society (Diniz et al. 2009:61). Oliver perceived the individualized medical perception of disability as created to serve the industrialised capitalist society and began to highlight how adjustment in social organisation could redress these ills committed on people with disabilities (Barnes & Mercer 2004:3).

Furthermore, Oliver (2004) draws attention to the negative effects of a passive society which does not neutralize effects of the impairments on individual functioning resulting in disability. The passiveness of society alluded to by Oliver (2004) demands that we assess ideology which normalizes injustices in society and this is an area explored by social constructionism. Oliver (2004) claims that society's intervention is self-serving for certain members of society rather than empowering to those affected by impairment. Abberley's (1987:7) comparison of disablement with challenges facing other minority groups such as women and black people in America emphasizes the influence of critical theory in development of social model and the complimentary role of the social constructionism which promote positive identification of people with disabilities as a minority group. In the current study I highlight how practices and policies in tertiary education disregard disability leading to curricula being inaccessible at that level of education (Miskovic & Gabel 2012:234). The relevance of social model cannot be overemphasised in highlighting structural, policy and attitudinal changes required for an education environment which is accessible for students with disabilities. Though the social

model uses the concept ‘disabled person’ to highlight the disempowering nature of society on people with disabilities the current study maintains the use of the phrase ‘people/students with disabilities’.

The following make up central idea of the social model:

It fights against social oppression of people with disabilities through the environmental and attitudinal barriers (Traustadottir 2009:3). Traustadottir (2009:6) notes that this understanding of oppressive tendencies by ‘normal’ people inspired advocacy for the rights of people with disability to participate in social and economic policies of their respective communities. Fernie and Henning (2006:24) expound the argument by stating that social institutions exacerbate disability by their negligence to plan for and accommodate people with disabilities in mainstream activities. The central argument is that although individuals may have physical impairments, society’s response to these impairments determines whether the individuals in society will be empowered or disabled (Reany, Gorra & Hassan 2012:194). Part of the effort to transform social institutions such as schools is to challenge educators to question how their professional practices may promote notions of ability/disability dichotomy (Danforth & Rhodes 1997:358). Thus, the social model argues that failure of society to create enablers for people with impairments to be socially independent turns their impairment into a disability, thus, the phrase “disabled people”.

In their discussion of the social model of disability Shakespeare and Watson (2001) clarify how impairment and disability have reciprocal influence on each other. The social model portrays people with disabilities as oppressed and defines disability as social oppression. The idea of social oppression in the social model encapsulates the essence of critical theory which argues for social ideological transformation to emancipate the minority in society. Major international policy frameworks such the Salamanca Statement have reflected the dual influence of critical theory and the social model of disability in suggesting that social institutions such as schools, their philosophies and programmes should transform to accommodate diversity and contribute to success for the vulnerable groups in society (UNESCO 1994:21).

Miskovic and Gabel’s (2012:234) analysis of the social model highlight the interactive nature of constitutional and environmental factors in the lives of individuals with disabilities and supports an argument advanced by Oliver (2004:21) that rehabilitative support is acknowledged. It can be

concluded from this argument that support to students with disabilities should go beyond access to the physical environment and curricula but health and psychosocial support that would help them cope with the challenges brought by their impairments.

2.2.2 The Social Constructionist version

The development of the social constructionist model is equally credited to people with disabilities, namely, Harlan Hahn and Irving Kenneth Zola (Oliver 1996:23; Barnes 2013:6). Hahn (1983:37) claims that serious misunderstanding of people with disabilities comes from “...the common tendency to equate disability with functional impairments or limitations”. The knowledge and professional experience of ‘normal’ people cannot sufficiently reflect true experiences of living with a disability (Zola 1979). Zola (1979) asserts that, “...the world in general and the medical world in particular still too often feel they are in the best position to know what is in the best interest of the disabled.... A personal experience shows how occasionally ludicrous this claim is”. Hahn (1983:36) observes that disability laws developed in the 1970s by the United States of America (USA) mostly reflected limitations of physical attributes from people with disabilities than discrimination they suffered as a result of poor perceptions of their capabilities. In a publication five years later Hahn (1988:40) argues:

...the functional demands exerted on human beings by the environment are fundamentally determined by public policy. The present forms of architectural structures and social institutions exist because statutes, ordinances, and codes either required or permitted them to be constructed in that manner. These public policies imply values, expectations, and assumptions about the physical and behavioral attributes that people ought to possess in order to survive or participate in community life.

The argument advanced by Hahn (1988) above reflects confluence of both constructionism and critical theory in acknowledging the influence of institutional and structural ideology in the development of barriers for people with disabilities (Barton 2003:8). Oliver (1996:22) also states that Goffman’s (1963) seminal work entitled “Stigma” captured “perceptions of the oppressor rather than those of the oppressed”. The observation underscores the significance of engaging people with disabilities on decisions about their lives and this is the central argument of my study.

Given that “...disability, in everyday thought and language, is associated with failure, with dependency, with not being able to do things” (Shakespeare 2014:95), Hunt (1966:4) emphasises that they, as people with disabilities, must challenge “...this devaluation of ourselves, yearning only to be able to earn our living and thus prove our worth”. The arguments raised by constructionist perspectives depict power dynamics in society where dominant groups oppress the less privileged and create systems which normalise such inequality (Anastasiou & Kauffman 2013:441). The negative discourses about disability benefited medically-oriented professions as they accumulated power to direct lives of persons with disabilities and the narratives also profited the state in its quest to control access to state-sponsored welfare system and most importantly, the negative publicity promoted western capitalist values of individualism, competitiveness and consumerism (Barnes 1996:44-45). As Barnes (1996:46) sees it, people with disabilities posed a threat to the commonly held social values. Social constructionism sets out to undo this damage.

Schools as examples of the social institutions promote inequality in society and teach children that it is normal to attain different scores without individual social context ameliorated (Dyson 1999:39). Mainstream education was used to sieve the best grain of society from chaff. In this regard Dyson (1999:40) postulates that special education in special schools “...legitimises the treatment of children (and hence adults) with disabilities as deviant, removes the imperative for any social restructuring in response to their characteristics, and thus contributes to their oppression”. The social constructionist perspective uses the arguments of critical theorists namely, that “knowledge is actively constructed by individuals in interaction with the environment and with others” (Castle 1997:55) and as Foucault (1982) argues, knowledge is crucial for empowerment as “...knowledge reinforces and supports existing regimes of truth” (Manias & Street 2000:53).

Traustadottir (2009:32) states that disability as a social construct is linked to Goffman’s 1963 assertion that there is inevitable inequality when people with a social stigma and ‘normal’ people interact socially. According to Goffman (1963:14), ‘normal’ people “...believe the person with stigma is not quite human ... [and they] exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often un-thinkably, reduce his life chances”. Unwittingly persons with disabilities are socialised within the same frame to passively accept the stigma and consequent

discrimination that follows (Goffman 1963:14). Misconstrued perception of people with disabilities as weak and less human make continuous narratives in society, maintained by thoughts and actions, which are mistaken for objective reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966:33). Social constructionists assertion that there are misperceptions about disability reflects critical theory's argument that those in power have potential to distort truth, as truth is a product of this world (Rabinow & Rose, 2003:3). Incidentally, Danforth and Rhodes (1997:358) invite educators to reflect how their words, actions and thoughts sustain the disabling conceptions of impairments.

The use of social constructionism in my study to investigate access to tertiary education for students with disability in Lesotho follows from critical theory's argument that, unless challenged, state institutions such as schools try to ensure the state's worldly gain at the expense of individual wellbeing and health (Foucault 1982:784). The state began to produce truths that were no longer reflective of an individual but foreign truth was 'fed' to him to accept being dominated by state interests. Hence, Foucault advocates that individuals must define their status within these power relations (Better 2011:9). Additionally, Hahn (1982:389) argues that people with disabilities can overcome negative ideology about disability from the public by "find[ing] some means of surmounting their traditional role as patients and of developing a positive sense of identity which transforms their stigmatized liabilities into assets". Therefore, institutional practices which result in oppression of minority groups should be challenged as discriminatory (Liggett 1988:264).

The social constructionist approach does not distinguish disability and impairment but highlights that people with impairment are socialised into thinking that they are worthless of the humane treatment given to others, they are inferior and cannot achieve like others (Shakespeare & Watson 2001:10). The social constructionist approach advocates for development and use of policies (Scotch 2000:216) as deterrent against the prejudice and inequality in society (Traustadottir 2009:14) and to promote disability rights (Mor 2006:13).

There are essential changes which social constructionism suggests can bring ideological transformation and enable social inclusion for people with disabilities:

First, it is critical that people with disabilities must “suspend belief that commonly held accepted categories or understanding receive their warrant through observation.... [and] challenge the objective basis of conventional knowledge” (Gergen 1985:267). This is the basis upon which critical theorists such as Foucault challenged minority groups to think differently about themselves and reshape their attitude towards the state and its organs (Rabinow & Rose 2003:3). Foucault maintained that “...power is not an exclusive possession or right of certain individuals” (Lemke 2010:32) but can be influenced in any direction by participants in the power struggle.

Second, in order to challenge the status quo people with disabilities must identify themselves as a minority group that fights for the group’s rights for an inclusive society (Anastasiou & Kauffman 2011:371). Public policy transformation is at the core of constructionism because it both reflects and influences unspoken assumptions and ideologies about physical requirements for daily living (Hahn 1985:296). With specific reference to America, Liggett (1988:271) maintains that the minority group approach to disability gave people with disabilities credible voice within the political system. Additionally, Silvers (1994:159-160) states that enactment of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 transformed persons with disabilities “...from patients to persons, assigning them equal rights in public and proprietary transactions”. The challenges in making the minority group approach a success lies in what Abberley (1987:9) terms “an attitude of ambivalence towards impairment”. This is recognising impairment as ‘bad’ in as far as the limitations it imposes on human functioning but refusing to accept that it is similar to being dead or pursuing an inferior life (Silvers 1994:159). Individuals with disabilities must disown their disadvantaged status to claim the right to fair treatment and access to resources (Scotch 2000:216).

Activists such as Zola (1979) admitted that change must be initiated by persons with disabilities who must first work on improving their self-concept. For the minority approach to succeed, Hahn (1985:310) argues that people with disabilities must be willing to assume a minority group identity similar to gender and racial minorities and demonstrate pride reflected by black minority group slogans such as “black-is-beautiful”. To this extent Wendell (1996:67) asserts that people with disabilities must break, for themselves, the cultural and ideological association of disability with fear, weakness and dependence before members of the public can recognise social and ideological barriers they create. To quote Foucault (1982:785), “Maybe the target nowadays is

not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are”. People with disabilities must deny the association of impairments with death sentence. That is, persons with disabilities must accept and promote life with impairment as a viable form of life for the individual who is impaired (Abberley 1987:9; Liggett 1988:271).

2.3 WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE MEDICAL MODEL?

The advent of the social model and social constructionist perspectives to disability brought about inclusive education initiatives that are in direct contrast to the medical model of disability which sees disability as “...an affliction from which a minority of individuals suffer and which is attributable to ‘natural’ (i.e. physical and medical) causes” (Dyson & Forlin 1999:26). Barnes (2013:4) indicates that the medical model “...required [persons with disabilities] to view their current status as unacceptable”. That is, it blames them for being different and not fitting the conventional education system hence the creation of special education provided away from the ‘normal’ rest, in separate schools, so as to protect interests of the capitalist society (Dyson 1999:39). The medical model transmitted the biased truth perceived by critical theorists as oppressive to minority groups, such as people with disabilities, in the sense that it forced them to accept an imposed truth despite it being incongruent with their needs (Morrell 2009:97). Dyson (1999:39) postulates that mainstream education serves the needs of the privileged in society and perpetuates rather than remove social inequalities. In addition, Leach (2013:268) notes that “...higher education began as education for elite”. Similarly, Leathwood, (2005:315,317) has noted that higher education curricula continues to exclude women and other cultural groups but promotes values of “...white, masculinist establishment”. In the same vein special education is criticized for promoting exclusion of students with disabilities while disguised as serving their needs; misfits are educated separately so that ‘normal’ students can demonstrate their academic prowess without hindrance in mainstream schools (Dyson 1999:40). So when medically inspired terms such as ‘fairness’ are used in administering higher education curricula, Leathwood (2005:311) challenges us to ask, ‘Fair to whom if the needs of minority groups are ignored’?

A modified form of exclusion called ‘integration’ was heralded in Scandinavian countries in the 1960s (Mosia 2014:294). Integration is still influenced by the medical model of disability in that whilst students with disabilities are educated together with their peers, there is no support. According to Lynas (1986:63) integrated students must show no difference with others by

behaving in as ‘normal’ a way as possible. Studies on the integration movement concluded that students with disabilities were required to fit within education contexts which were not designed for them (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka & Stubbs 1995:11; Dyson & Forlin 1999). The other two terms associated with this medical model of perceiving students with disabilities are ‘assimilation’ and ‘normalisation’. In describing assimilation Lynas (1986:63) says it attempts to eliminate human differences and force students with disabilities to “...compete on as near equal terms as possible” with their able-bodied counterparts, a position which disadvantages students with disabilities (Mosia 2014). On the other hand, normalisation is described as “...making available to the mentally retarded patterns and conditions of everyday life which are as close as possible to the norms and patterns of the mainstream of society” (Nirje 1994:19). Nirje’s (1994) conception of normalisation is positive and denotes improving standards of services for persons with disabilities to meet societal expectations, routines and lives. However, Oliver (1999:166-167) argues that the normalisation principle rests on the normal-abnormal dichotomy and forces one group of individuals to meet requirements of life for another. In the context of education system, schools remain the same and students with disabilities are to be fixed to fit existing school systems or they are moved to alternative special/segregated schools created to keep them away from the ‘normal’ if they cannot be fixed (Lone & Kumar 2013:15).

In contrast, the social model encourages social and institutional arrangements to change sufficiently for persons with disabilities to enjoy equal education and life opportunities (Terzi 2014:486). This entails transformation of ideology about disability, improvement of physical resources to be accessible and empowerment of persons with disabilities to live independently and contribute towards development of their communities. As Salmi and Bassett (2014:362) see it, any society that wants to promote equity, access to education seems an effective method to do so. Similarly, the social constructionist perspective requires society to question its notions of ability and disability and examine how society has passed on knowledge that devalues people with disabilities and their potential to live meaningful lives (Danforth & Rhodes 1997:357-359).

2.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The argument that higher education is pervaded by normalcy disguised under the fairness label and people with disability enter as though to a foreign world where they are required to conform

(Madriaga, Hanson, Kay & Walker 2011:902) makes the use of the social model and social constructionist perspectives relevant for this study.

Both the social model and Social constructionist approach are indebted to the ideas of and inspiration from critical theorists whose work reflects the need to transform social structures and interrogate the imbalanced power dynamics in society with ableist identity that maintains privileged position of the elite in society. People with disabilities need a platform to generate knowledge about their needs and ways of learning which will shift power relations; knowledge is power. In the context of the current study, Reay (1998:519-522) argues that knowledge at higher education is aligned with the cultural capital of the elite white supremacy and any other group has to be assimilated into this dominant culture. Self-defined needs of people with disabilities can influence how HEIs approach them and develop inclusive education (Claiborne et al. 2011:514), even though "...elite organizations such as universities ... can lack the political motivation" to accommodate minority groups (Morley 1997:233). Therefore, the initiatives of the two theoretical perspectives inspire changes in social systems to develop policies and practices which promote equity.

CHAPTER THREE: ACCESS TO EDUCATION

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes how access to education should be understood; it addresses four values which schools must address to improve access to education, namely, presence, participation, acceptance and achievement. Next, it explains international policies which advocate for transformation of social systems such as schools so as to create access. Then, the chapter describes the concept of inclusive education and access to education and their complementary nature. Access to education is then explained from the medical model of education. Access is also described from the social model and social constructionism. The chapter discusses issues that affect access such as a disability policy, nature of curriculum, staff attitudes and gender influences. Lastly, the chapter reviews research that describes efforts to facilitate access at primary and secondary schools in Lesotho.

3.1 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Creating access to education at any level requires a concerted effort to transform regular education systems in at least three aspects, namely, the physical infrastructure, the curriculum and the teaching approaches (Dyson & Forlin 1999:25). The following four values, namely, presence, participation, acceptance and achievement, are central for an inclusive education system (Humphrey 2008: 42; UNESCO 2005:15). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005:15) describes presence as considerations in the learning context for students with disabilities and setting acceptance expectations for attendance and punctuality. This translates into efforts to challenge the students sufficiently and set acceptable standards for their development. Humphrey (2008:42) suggests that presence entails complete participation in regular classes without education provision in segregated settings. Participation is about enabling students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers without disabilities, share experiences, and engage the students in decisions that affect them (Booth 2005:153). Participation also denotes ensuring that the students receive quality education (Humphrey 2008:42; UNESCO 2005:15). Furthermore, Humphrey (2008:42) explains that students with disabilities should be accepted by fellow students and teachers at schools to facilitate cognitive, social and emotional development of every student. Achievement is explained as enabling students with disabilities to realise the outcome of education across the curriculum and beyond

mere performance in tests and examinations (UNESCO 2005:15). These values have been advocated for by many international policies that promote access to education some of which are described below.

3.1.1 A Rights Perspective to Access

Creating access to education for vulnerable students, including students with disabilities, serves their right to education and efforts to facilitate attainment of their maximum potential (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) advocates for non-discrimination in education and promotes equal opportunity for all. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) considers access to education as means to empower people with disabilities to be independent and self-sufficient and to enhance their full integration into mainstream society. The World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO 1990) emphasises virtues such as tolerance, reduction of inequalities and equity. It also emphasises active learner participation and creation of conducive learning environment as critical for enabling access. These virtues are in line with key values, namely: presence, participation, acceptance and achievement – for creating inclusive education described above. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) reiterates the right to education proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and further outlines necessary conditions that should be met to fulfill this right. International treaties have promoted certain values and principles that shift focus away from the persons with disabilities as deficient and propel social systems to transform and accommodate them. A comprehensive description of how schools must transform to facilitate access is described by Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as evidenced below.

3.1.2 The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention gives sufficient details on accommodations that need to be made to equalize opportunities for social inclusion of people with disabilities. Key principles of the Convention stated under article 3 reflect the social model of disability and include: promotion of independence, non-discrimination and equal participation in social development, promotion of equity and access. If the principles are adhered to, students with disabilities will be afforded the ideals of the CRPD. In particular five articles, namely, 9, 20, 21, 24 and 26 are explained. The

five selected articles cover areas of access such as mobility, freedom of expression and access to information, education and finally, habilitation and rehabilitation.

The ninth article advocates for physical access and access to information. States Parties are required to enable easy movement for people with mobility impairments, and make information accessible in alternative formats. Education institutions are obliged to comply with requirements of this article to offer services that would enable people with disabilities exercise independence. For example, signage to public facilities should be in formats [braille and sign language] that are user-friendly and information should generally be accessible. Article 20 reiterates the issue of physical access to resources, on an equal basis, at desired levels of independence and convenience for people with disabilities. For the current study this applies both to persons with physical impairment who need the environment and buildings to be accessible, and persons with visual impairment who require mobility skills to navigate their learning and living environments independently.

In article 21 freedom of expression for people with disabilities suggests that an institution needs to consult students with disabilities on any adjustments it needs to make since their needs cannot be met without their inputs invited. The Higher Education Policy in Lesotho requires HEIs to engage students in evaluating services they receive and to use such information to inform curricula design and delivery (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:10). Providing information in Braille and sign language should require no additional cost to students with disabilities and should be given timeously to meet equity requirements stated in article 3 of the CRPD as one of the desired principles. Given recent shift towards use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education, article 21 requires relevant services, including internet provision to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Therefore, provision of resources and training of staff, at institutions of learning, about the needs of students with disabilities is fundamental for achieving ideals of article 21. Access requires the institutions to involve all stakeholders and inspire a sense of commitment to the idea of inclusion.

Article 24 outlines the role of education in development of people with disabilities. It is holistic development that supports individuals to reach their maximum potential. Acquisition of skills in relevant areas of disability is emphasized such as sign language for the deaf and, Braille for the

blind. Therefore, the need to have appropriately trained teaching staff and/or support staff in sign language and/or Braille transcription, use of augmentative and alternative forms of communication and providing learning material in suitable formats cannot be overemphasized. The final paragraph 24(5) of the article directly speaks to the interest of the current study in that it targets access to tertiary education, and states that necessary accommodations can ensure success of students with disabilities at this level. Finally, article 26 relates to article 24 as it elaborates the psychosocial aspect of holistic development. It stresses the need for good network of support through peers and use of relevantly trained staff in psychosocial support.

These international policies promote the rights of people with disabilities and have inspired the application of the social model and social constructionism theories in education provision to improve its quality. The afore-mentioned policies, the social model and social constructionism promote empowerment of people with disabilities, their engagement in society and also promote their social and economic independence.

3.2 ACCESS AS CENTRAL TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education has gone through many transformations from definitions that were concerned mainly with placement, segregated/special or mainstream school, to how mainstream schools should be accessible to all learners irrespective of their differences. The World Conference on Education for All meeting in Jomtien, Thailand, set the foundation on which inclusive education debates evolve. The World Declaration on Education for All – EFA is based on ten articles. However articles 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9, Meeting basic learning needs, universalizing access and promoting equity, enhancing the environment for learning, developing a supportive policy context and mobilizing resources respectively, are critically important for inclusive education to succeed (UNESCO 1990). Inclusive education seeks to address individual needs of students with disabilities, amongst others and create opportunities for them to access education. Inclusive education is said to depart from fixing the student for a school to transforming it and developing resources so as to facilitate learning for all students. Inclusive education is about transforming schools to accommodate student diversity and schools must take account of students' individual developments and achievements. The World Declaration on Education for All indicates that change is made possible by a clear policy framework from the national level to the school context so as to inform the kind of change which is envisaged. Inspired by the social model, the

Salamanca Statement argues that social institutions and not students should change to accommodate diversity, and students with disability are to be given the right to “express their wishes with regard to their education” (UNESCO 1994:6) just as Claiborne et al. (2011:514) speak of a shift from ‘ascribed to self-defined needs’. From the social model and social constructionism needs are self-defined because persons with disabilities understand themselves better than any expert could do (Zola 1979).

Booth and Ainscow (2002:10) describe inclusive education as a process of engaging schools, communities, local authorities and governments to reduce barriers to participation and learning for all citizens. Inclusive education should also maximize student participation so that students realize their academic potential (Barton 2003:9). To this extent, Terzi (2014:484) notes that “...educational institutions should be designed to enact equal entitlement of every child to education, while acknowledging and respecting individual differences”. That is, within an inclusive context the three dimensional aspects of human development, namely, physical, cognitive and psychosocial are supported. Using the South African White Paper 6’s conception of inclusive education, Nkoane (2009:13) notes that inclusive education “...promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all students irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preferences, learning styles and language”.

Within the description of inclusive education the concept of access is dominant. Gidley, Hampson, Wheeler and Bereded-Samuel (2010:123) suggest that terms such as access, participation and success reflect degrees of inclusiveness so that it is the combination of the three notions which completes the process. Generally, the concept of access responds to how students with disabilities are allowed to independently benefit from available means of transport, parking space, buildings etc. without challenges (Chard & Couch 1998:610). Once the environment is accessible participation leads to empowerment and it is achieved by engaging students with disabilities to influence how they want their education to be structured (Vickerman 2012:252). Additionally, inclusive education requires restructure of institutions’ facilities for learning and retraining regular education teachers to diversify their teaching approaches (Westwood 2007:2-3). Nkoane (2006:46) further argues that inclusive education is not a once-off event but a process that taps into different aspects of the education system such as curriculum reforms, and access is achieved when there is flexibility. Winter and O’Raw (2010:12) explain inclusiveness of

education by highlighting issues such as allowing students to choose schools they would like to attend, and making the learning experience “meaningful and relevant for all”.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Access denotes transformation of social institutions such as schools so as to address students’ individual needs. Opening doors for all to come into institutions and programmes which are unchanged does not depict access; access is at the centre of educational provision. In trying to describe access to education for people with disabilities, disability scholars adopt Amartya Sen’s capability approach to functioning as a founding principle. The approach is based on the idea that all people deserve respect (Toson, Burrello & Knollman 2013:491) and it, therefore, advocates for removal of barriers that are likely to impede individuals’ potential. Toson et al. (2013:492) maintain that the approach depicts a person’s “freedom to achieve valuable functioning ... [and] This freedom to achieve is dependent on social arrangements”. From this description of access two issues namely, freedom to choose desired programme and the role of context, should be considered.

Firstly, a person with disabilities’ freedom of choice is valued; this refers to students’ right to study any programme of their choice without reference to impairment as hindrance. Terzi (2014:486) postulates that deprivation of educational opportunities for students with disabilities is a basic disadvantage similar to removing opportunity for life to such individuals. Access presupposes that programmes are changed to accommodate students’ needs. That is, institutions should transform sufficiently to allow students with disabilities a choice of programmes that are valuable to them and the students should be supported to succeed. Furthermore, access mandates social and educational institutions to ‘equalise people’s capabilities’ by giving necessary human and financial resources that support them to ‘achieve the functionings they have reason to value’ (Terzi 2014:486).

Secondly, access is not possible without considering the multiple social, personal and environmental factors that influence what individuals can do and become (Wilson-Strydom 2011:411). According to Nkoane (2009:16) the idea of access to education is a way of transforming the physical, curricula and management styles of mainstream education to allow all students to benefit from the education provision that is diversified. From the preceding

discussion it can be noted that access is important for, among others, minority groups in society so that the physical and curricula environments are made accessible to them.

The term access can further be understood by describing Sen's (1985, 1999) ideas of functionings and capabilities. The definition of functionings depicts people's achievement within different timeframes. It can refer to the past as in 'achieved outcomes'; timelessness – what a person does and futuristic as “actions and states that people want to achieve and engage in” (Terzi, 2014:485; Wilson-Strydom, 2011:409). In line with Toson et al. (2013), Wilson-Strydom (2011:409) puts the same emphasis on the need for functionings to reflect an individual's desires. Using the emphasis it can be argued that university programmes would be truly accessible if students with disabilities choose from all programmes for which they qualify without discrimination. In addition, lower levels of education should also sufficiently prepare the students to qualify for their desired programmes.

The concept of capabilities refers to “...the genuine, effective opportunities that people have to achieve valued functionings” (Terzi 2014:485). According to Terzi (2014:485) capabilities reflect people's freedom to make desired choices which fulfill their lives. As Sen (1999:45) notes, “...the quality of life a person enjoys [functionings] is not merely a matter of what he or she achieves, but also of what options the person has had the opportunity to choose from”. Functionings are people's achievements while capabilities are their potential (Wilson-Strydom 2011:409). Therefore, students with disabilities achieve valuable functionings if there are resources that enable them similar opportunities of studying as their peers. Students can attain 'good' results (functionings) which may not reflect their true potential; that is, had they been exposed to better resources, support and doing their desired programme, results could have been better. Analysis of examination results alone may fail to depict the concept of access because functionings may be achieved without capabilities enhanced. Therefore, access should translate into meaningful social and academic opportunities to learn (Waetjen 2006:205).

As previously stated, access to education cannot be achieved without overcoming contextual factors acting as barriers to learning. Access to education for students with disabilities involves addressing various dimensions of education support such as physical access to buildings, overcoming curricular and attitudinal barriers (Hadjikakou, Polycarpou & Hadjilia 2010:404). As

Dworkin (1981:302) indicates, a person with disabilities engages with life from an unequal position or with “fewer resources” and, therefore, proportionately needs more resources. Access to education promotes positive discrimination which ensures that students with disabilities’ social disadvantages are compensated to avert negative effects on the rates of achievement and success in their studies (Gewirtz 1998:472). Access is also associated with ensuring equity, a principle that promotes differential treatment of people as people or students with disabilities are amongst social groups “identified as having greater needs than others and therefore requiring greater support and resources” (Savage, Sellar & Gorur 2013:162). Therefore, access to education unpacks minute details of inclusive education processes which ensure that students’ needs are addressed and learning opportunities improved. This understanding of access challenges perceptions of a student from the medical model of disability as explained below. The medical model promotes normality disguised as fairness while access from the capability approach, just described, promotes equity and the need to compensate for additional needs of students with disabilities.

3.4 ACCESS FROM THE MEDICAL PARADIGM

The medical paradigm perceives formal education as a system that promotes social standards of normality. Therefore, individuals have to prove themselves independently that they ‘fit’ within these standards. According to Rothman (2010:197), the medical paradigm assumes that there are norms or standards that define functioning in human beings and an individual with impairments is “...defined by his or her ability to overcome a disability, he or she is viewed as a failure if unable to do so”. The medical model, in this sense, uses the integration notion of access where students are accommodated in schools that have not transformed their physical structures, curricula and teaching and learning strategies (UNESCO, 2005:9). As Engelbrecht (1999:8) argues, integration did little to “challenge or alter in any way the organisation and provision of the curriculum for all learners”. Skrtic (1991:169) states that the non-adaptable and convergent education system requires that students manoeuvre through it and conform to a limited number of standard programmes failing which, students are declared abnormal.

Integration can also be explained by two words namely, assimilation and normalisation where access would be understood as the effort to encourage students with disabilities to “compete on as near equal terms as possible with normally hearing pupils” (Lynas 1986:63). On the other

hand, Thurman and Fiorelli (1979:342) state that the principle of normalisation uses nondisabled people standards to assess normality and anyone else has to conform or be judge atypical. In this regard, the medical model uses the ableist discourse which discourages differences (Levy 2001:60) to the extent that “deaf youths may internalise social constructs, have low opinions of themselves as deaf and attempt to ‘pass’ as ‘normal’” (Butler, McNamee, Skelton & Valentine 2001:50-51). The students with disabilities have to strive to fit within what majority do and conform to standards used by majority to judge themselves. They are pressured to fit and be ‘normal’ like everyone else and unwittingly accept such attitudes though socially disempowering (Vlachou & Papananou 2015). Some students reflect on experiences of themselves as survivors and fighters (Morina 2015). Therefore, integration only ensures placement in a venue or setting devoid of concern with the quality of education provided (Winter & O’Raw 2010:12). Access is, therefore, achieved through individuals’ ability to cope within the normal school setting (Jelas & Mohd.Ali 2014:995) or at best it is achieved by a deliberate attempt to ‘fix’ nonconformist persons through surgery, use of assistive devices and other mechanisms (Rothman 2010:197).

Mainstream education provision has been accused of poor perception of access which forces students to cope without any structural adjustment on the part of an institution (Barton 2003:8; Mullins and Preyde, 2013:151). Leathwood (2005:308) questions standards and principles of objectivity, neutrality and fairness used in mainstream education; the question is, fair to whom? There is little or no attention to how teaching approaches, material used, classroom arrangements and assessment methods have reduced access and denied equal participation for students with disabilities in an institution (Howell 2006:168). Howell (2006:169) argues that simple provision of technology such as braille for the visually impaired may not amount to ‘proper’ access. The medical perspective tries to fix the student for the system using expert knowledge or what Claiborne et al. (2011:514) call “ascribed need” instead of incorporating students’ views of their needs. Addressing contextual challenges is a social model’s perception of access as shall be discussed below.

3.5 ACCESS FROM THE SOCIAL MODEL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Access embodies principles of non-discrimination, equity, and the liberation of the disabled who were previously excluded from making meaningful contribution to their personal and community

lives. Education provision from the social model inspires not only personal development but recognises that access to education broadens individuals' input in society leading to a good life which one has reason to value (Terzi 2014:486). In this regard, access involves proper assessment and reform of all social structures that may act as barriers to learning and development for students with disabilities. Access from the capability approach promotes giving people opportunities to make choices in their lives (Terzi 2014:485).

Oliver (2004:21) highlights three key issues about the social model of disability: (a) the model shifts attention from deficits associated with impairment to social and cultural barriers that disable individuals; (b) individuals' problems entail a holistic assessment of the interaction between impairments and multiple contextual challenges from transportation, beliefs, education and so on as they mutually influence each other; and (c) the model does not discredit interventions, medically or educationally, that alleviate the effects of impairment. Therefore, access involves changes of social institutions to secure resources and create services that grant relevant opportunities for people with disabilities to succeed (Anastasiou & Kauffman 2013:442). The social constructionist model acknowledges that people without disabilities may not understand experiences of people with disabilities (Hahn 1983:37) unless people with disabilities become the mouthpiece of these experiences (Zola, 1979). The advocacy can only come when people with disabilities perceive themselves positively and promote life with a disability as worth living (Abberley 1987:9; Liggett 1988:271). Therefore, access from social constructionism is about providing equitable education as a right to persons with disabilities. It also recognises that persons with disabilities need to be consulted about their needs and barriers for institutions to effectively address them.

3.6 ACCESS IN THE CONTEXT OF LESOTHO

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability was ratified by Lesotho on the 2nd of December 2008 (United Nations 2008:3). Research in Lesotho suggests that access to education for students with disabilities is generally a problem despite the country having dedicated most of its resources to the basic education level (Shelile & Hlalele 2014). A SINTEF (2011:48) study in Lesotho reveals that in children with disabilities aged 5 to 10 years, 40% of them are out of school while the figure is slightly lower for the age group of 11-20 years. The reasons given for not attending school include, in descending order: not enough money (25.8%), because of

disability (22.4%) and illness (16.7%) (SINTEF 2011:50). Majority of studies on inclusive education in Lesotho describe inclusive practices at primary education level and to a lesser extent at lower and upper secondary levels of education. Some studies generally explore how Education for All (EFA) goals were achieved while others expound that inclusive education met challenges as suggested below.

A qualitative case study by Khati, Khati and Makatjane (2009) describes whether primary school pupils completed their education cycle within the recommended 7 years. The study found that 50% of students who enrolled at grade one level in 2000, when Lesotho began free primary education, did not reach grade seven (Khati et al. 2009:9). A higher percentage of these students, 61% boys compared to 30% girls, did not complete the seven years and high wastage was in rural than urban areas (Khati et al. 2009:9-11). In Lesotho access to education for girls is better than that of boys and more girls gain tertiary qualifications than boys (Ansell 2002:92-93). Females also dominated access to tertiary education with 59.4% of the total enrolment in 2011/2012 academic year which was 25, 507 students (Council on Higher Education 2012). Female dominance in tertiary education is also noted in the Higher Education Policy (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013). It has been suggested that insufficient support for students affects their retention and progression into subsequent levels of learning. For example, a qualitative study by Moloi, Morobe and Urwick (2008) suggests that poor retention of students results from, among other factors, poor resources such as teaching overcrowded classrooms of up to 70 students per teacher resulting in teachers who resort to defensive and teacher-centred approaches meant to control the learning activities (Moloi et al. 2008:614-620). A literature study by Seotsanyana and Matheolane (2010:48) also points out that the rollout of free primary education brought a huge influx of students per teacher leading to teachers using ineffective teaching methods.

Other studies have evaluated inclusive education practices in Lesotho referring to how the 1989 Policy Statement was implemented in practice. According to Chataika, Mckenzie, Swart and Lyner-Cleophas (2012:387), though access to education at primary level was promoted by a policy, limited resources such as “insufficient teacher training, inadequate staff support and lack of accountability and monitoring” negatively affected its implementation. Johnstone and Chapman’ (2009) used a mixed-method approach to explain if the implementation of the policy statement was successful. They note that at the inception of inclusive education in Lesotho, the

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) chose ten primary schools to pilot it but the in-service training focused less on inclusive approaches and more creating positive attitudes and imparting skills in basic screening (Johnstone & Chapman 2009:137-138). Additionally, MOET was under-resourced and failed to make follow up observations in pilot schools leaving the inclusive initiative to crumble from poor support, scarce resources, and lack of reward to schools and teachers practicing inclusive education (Johnstone & Chapman 2009:141-144). Similarly, a survey by Mateusi, Khoaeane and Naong (2014) examined how inclusive education policy was implemented in Lesotho primary schools and concluded that schools lacked resources to create physical access, support an inclusive curriculum or adequately train teachers for inclusive education (Mateusi et al. 2014:267). From the continuous professional development standpoint, a qualitative study by Shelile and Hlalele (2014) concluded that MOET special education unit was under-resourced, and similarly to Johnstone and Chapman's (2009) observation above, teachers who received in-service training were not followed to their schools to assess implementation challenges, schools lacked quality leadership for inclusion and government at large fails to implement disability policy issues (Shelile & Hlalele 2014:678, 679). On the same note a qualitative study by Mosia (2014:301) suggested that barriers to inclusive education in Lesotho resulted from, among others, lack of support and resources dedicated for inclusive education as well as poor assessment/placement mechanisms. Similar to Moloi et al. (2008), Mosia (2014) maintains that mainstream teachers are overwhelmed by high student: teacher ratios and lack of knowledge of how to support learners with special education needs.

Finally, Matlosa (2010) opines that the language in education policy in Lesotho disadvantages the hearing impaired to access education as English and Sesotho are the only two official languages in Lesotho. Sesotho is used as a medium of instruction until grade three and English is used from grade four onwards. This excludes the deaf who use Lesotho Sign Language (LSL) which is not Sesotho or English (Matlosa 2010:73). Parents are also said to know little about a limited number of schools for the deaf and take their children to school late while other parents do not afford the fees because available schools are private (Matlosa 2010:74,75). Some of the challenges explained here have led to the conclusion, as stated in the Higher Education Policy, that poor access at primary and secondary levels limits numbers of students with disabilities who qualify for tertiary education (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:1).

3.7 BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Generally fewer people with disabilities have access to basic education than their nondisabled counterparts. According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2013:20), only 10% of all children with disabilities are in school and of this number only half complete their primary education. This section explains key challenges that create barriers to access in education, namely, appropriate policy environment, curricula flexibility, access to built-in environment, attitudes of staff and influence of gender on access.

3.7.1 Influence of appropriate policy environment

Research on access argues that institutions of learning may not effectively achieve educational access unless they have clear policies which are also informed by national policies. For example, lack of policies is blamed for poor implementation of access to education in countries such as Turkey and Cyprus (Hadjikakou et al. 2010:405; Koca-Atabey, Karanci, Dirik and Aydemir 2011:115). In the context of South African tertiary education, Matshediso (2007:709) sees gaps in available policies resulting from attitudinal barriers; current disability policy documents are indecisive; each relegates responsibility to the next. In a study conducted in South Africa, UNESCO (1997:39) found that out of seven universities surveyed, only one had a disability policy, two had begun the process of developing one and there was no attempt in the remaining four institutions. Lack of policies left students with disabilities in these institutions to struggle through programmes just as one requirement for admission asks “whether the student can complete the relevant course despite his/her disability” (UNESCO 1997:39). Another study by the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) (2011:17,50) concludes that South African HEIs have made little progress on addressing issues of “access, retention and participation of students with disabilities” as reflected by lack of institutional policies on disability issues. FOTIM (2011) points out that in a few instances where policies exist in South African universities, they are policies addressing staff’s Employment Equity and include students’ needs as additions. A UNICEF (2013:20) study indicates that in countries such as Malawi and Tanzania there is only five percent success rate for persons with disabilities at primary education and as a result of lack of disability policy in some developing countries, a disability doubles one’s chance of not attending school.

Research on disability policies such as the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 in the United Kingdom (UK) note that institutions are required to ensure equity in education provision by legislating against discrimination in selection, teaching and creating physical access (Ralph & Boxall 2005:372). Policies are compared to a roadmap which guides the traveller to a desired destination without which the journey, in terms of plans for time, resources etc. would be impossible. However, using Hadjidakou et al.'s (2010:404) research findings in Cyprus and Vickerman & Blundell's (2010:28) study in the UK as examples, when there are policies without a change of attitudes from all stakeholders, students with disabilities continue to be excluded and discriminated.

3.7.2 Curriculum flexibility

Debates on access to education for minority groups display continued tension between 'merit and equality' many years after opening access for non-traditional groups to study at all levels including the tertiary level (Leach 2013:269). Read, Archer and Leathwood (2003:261-2) observe that despite minority groups entering HEIs, the culture and curricula continue to reflect a student as "White, middle-class and male". Leathwood (2005:315) notes that minority groups fail to challenge the status quo of curriculum; students learn to adapt and not question how curriculum is structured. Ansell (2002:93) laments that after many years of independence in Lesotho and Zimbabwe, secondary education curricula reflects nothing about local realities or women's livelihood, in the two countries, but colonial knowledge. Nkoane (2006:46) asserts that each student requires curriculum which speaks to their issues in life and taps into their areas of creativity and strength. However, curriculum at HEIs is not a co-production of students and their lecturers, but is centrally designed and at times foreign or irrelevant to students' needs (Nkoane 2006:45).

Curriculum is also made inaccessible when information cannot be provided in alternative forms such that programmes in which students study Mathematics and Accounting but content of the courses is inaccessible for the students with visually impairments leading to inability to learn independently (Ngubane-Mokiwa 2013:117-118). In cases where students with visual disabilities are accommodated, they receive their study material later than their nondisabled counterparts (Mokiwa & Phasha 2012:S142-143; Ngubane-Mokiwa 2013) resulting in exclusion. Similar limitations of resources have also been observed in tertiary institutions in Lesotho where out of

13 higher education institutions registered with Council on higher Education only one had computers with JAWS (CHE 2012:13-14).

On a different note, Ashworth, Bloxham and Pearce (2010:212) question existing methods of assessment as biased against students with disabilities and using the individual deficit model that gives credit to some students for passing and blame those who cannot pass as incapable despite unjust and partial institutional practices. Assessment has traditionally brought rewards to some while condemning others, thus reducing or removing both educational and occupational opportunities for others (Leathwood 2005:310). Arguments for access state that assessment should improve from evaluating how much content can be recalled to assessment of quality of thought (Filer 2000:9; Nkoane 2006:51). Students' differing scores should be perceived to reflect diversity of student population rather than inferiority (Ashworth et al. 2010:221), and not promote current power politics where the teacher is the 'know it all' and requires everyone to be the same and meet certain norms and standards (Nkoane 2006:50). For example, assessment should consider how limited resources affect teaching students with visual impairment (Mokiwa & Phasha 2012:S145).

The current study perceives an accessible curriculum as the one which is diversified and adopting flexible methods of assessment. It transcends theoretical content that is detached from reality but taps into students' lived experiences while empowering them to use knowledge gained to change their lives. Assessment from the social model should evaluate the quality of learning, and would, therefore, go beyond the paper-pencil format to include oral examinations, practical display of acquired skills and production of novel ideas as a result of learning and would reflect diversity and flexibility.

3.7.3 Access to the physical environment

Physical obstacles are the main barriers to access at HEIs for students with mobility challenges and students sometimes change an institution of choice or programme due to inaccessible built facilities (Hadjikakou et al. 2010:404). The social model emphasizes that society disables people with impairments if sidewalks are not made for wheelchair users, storeyed buildings have no ramps or elevators, doorknobs are too high, doors are too narrow and so on (Engelbrecht & De Beer 2014:10-14). Inaccessible physical environments reduce the level of independence to the

extent that students with mobility challenges can feel excluded and insignificant (Hadjikakou et al. 2010:405). Creating physical access for students with mobility challenges is one of the most straightforward modifications institutions of learning can make to promote inclusive education. Therefore, making appropriate modifications to an environment promote mobility-impaired students' capabilities and functionings.

3.7.4 Staff attitudes

Attitudes can become a barrier to access to education. Ralph and Boxall (2005:372) suggest that students with disabilities are discriminated not only by actions committed in the institutions but also by omissions such as failure to provide information in formats appropriate for certain disabilities. Access from the social model requires social institutions to transform their discriminatory practices and adopt a collective effort to problem solution. Lecturers may fail to give expected support such as giving printed or soft copies of notes, allowing more time during tests and examinations, giving alternative forms of assessments such as oral instead of written examination etc. (Mullins & Preyde 2013:154; Cameron & Nunkoosing 2012:345). Barton (2003:9) postulates that access should inform new ideas of concepts such as 'success', 'failure' and 'ability' in education in order to positively influence attitudes of the role players within the education system.

Lecturers' ignorance and resultant attitude influence them to overlook students' challenges in class and make no adjustments to their teaching and assessment methods, thus leaving students vulnerable and lacking access to curriculum (Cameron and Nunkoosing 2012:345). UNESCO (2008 quoted by Jelas and Mohd.Ali 2014:995) states that if students have to acclimatize themselves to the "expectations, styles, routines and practices of the education system instead of the education system adapting to the learner" access is denied. Undue privilege is given to the written word that when students with dyslexia, for example, have to be given an oral examination, lecturers and nondisabled students feel it is unfair advantage for the student with disability (Mullins & Preyde 2013:156). Positive perceptions from staff are associated with greater knowledge of the disability, and lecturers' positive evaluations influenced them to be active and resourceful in seeking external support and adjusting their teaching to the needs of identified students (Cameron and Nunkoosing 2012:344,345).

Mullins and Preyde (2013:154) suggest that discrimination resulting from universities' rigid structures create a paradox where, though students would benefit from being identified as disabled, some prefer anonymity in fear that they would attract negative attention for their studies. It is evident in research that lecturers' negative attitudes induce fear and hesitation from the students, to disclose their disability or seek support (Cameron & Nunkoosing 2012:346; Mullins & Preyde 2013:154).

3.7.5 Influence of gender on access

Gender in some developing countries also influences access to education. A World Health Organization's (2011:206) study involving 51 countries states that 50.6% of males with disabilities complete primary education compared to 61.3% of males without disabilities, and the rate of completion for females is 41.7% and 52.6%, respectively. The findings show males to be better off than females in accessing education irrespective of disability. Lei and Myers (2011:1170) claim women with disabilities are most likely to suffer double disadvantage due to socially constructed dimensions of gender which render them as minors to their male counterparts.

Similarly, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (2013:1) describes girls and women as 'doubly disabled' because they have to overcome barriers against their impairments and inequalities brought by biased gender roles. Literacy rates for women with disabilities are estimated at 1 per cent, and as UNICEF (2013:1) report indicates, "Girls with disabilities are also less likely to get an education, receive vocational training or find employment than boys with disabilities or girls without disabilities". Kasiram and Subrayen (2013:71) revealed that women with visual impairment are discriminated not only by society generally but also by "sighted women".

3.8 SUMMARY

Inclusive education is guided by four values, namely, presence, participation, acceptance and achievement. Implementation of these values translates into creating access to education which promotes meaningful opportunities for students with disabilities to participate and succeed in their education. In line with the dictates of the international policies the concept inclusive education empowers students with disabilities for community engagement and participation. Contrast has been drawn between access from the medical model which encourages students

with disabilities to conform to norms and standards which disregard diversity and access from the social model where diversity of students is celebrated and students are supported to participate and achieve in their studies without trying to fix them for the education system. It has been noted that access to education is affected by innumerable social issues that include policy, curricula, built-in environment, attitudes and gender. These challenges are evident at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. The next section of this study describes access to tertiary education for students with disabilities.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPERIENCES ON ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews international and regional literature on access to tertiary education generally and then narrows the discussion to access for students with disabilities. Extensive search for literature was made using several search engines including Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) and Google Scholar to find studies on access to tertiary education for students with disabilities under each country in which a brief description was given. Review of literature includes policy and practice experiences from conveniently selected international countries namely, Cyprus, Norway, Turkey, United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) and regional/African countries namely, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania. Lastly, the chapter explains access to tertiary education for students with disabilities in Lesotho.

4.1 ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION GENERALLY

Access to tertiary education is on the rise across the globe. The United States of America (USA) is credited for, comparatively, facilitating greater access to tertiary education until the end of the nineteenth century when other countries closed the gap (Marginson 2016:244). A survey by Danic (2015), which covered eight countries, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom, had a sample of more than seven thousand participants. The study claims that currently the USA has 40% adults aged between 25-34 with university degrees behind Japan with over 50% and European countries come third with the number of adults making less than 30%. In addition, a literature study by Marginson (2016:245) estimates that 30% of the world population has access to tertiary education and more than 75% participation rate is in European and North American countries. A survey by Saar, Taht and Roosalu (2014:695), which sampled 3943 tertiary education students across 13 European countries, namely, England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Russia, indicates that in Europe, Norway has the highest rate of adult participation, the United Kingdom has medium participation while Austria and Belgium have the least adult participation in tertiary education. Among the reasons for the high participation of adults in HE in Norway is that majority of tertiary institutions are public and tuition is free in public HE (Maassen, Moen & Stensaker 2011:483). Similar to

Norway, higher education in Sweden is free and free tuition is said to increase enrolment of students, including students from vulnerable groups (Berggren et al. 2016:341).

A literature study by Odhiambo (2016) gives a two-sided perspective about access to tertiary education in Africa. He claims that while enrolment at tertiary institutions in Africa increased by 77% between 2003 and 2008 against 53% worldwide, Africa's gross enrolment ratio of less than 6% is lower than the rest of the world. Additionally, while the proportion of adults 25 years and older with a tertiary education qualification averaged 3.94% for the world in 2010, Sub-Saharan Africa had a low .78% (Odhiambo 2016:198). Odhiambo notes that, among other challenges, African HEIs have a low capacity to absorb demand for tertiary education. For example, in Kenya, less than 20% of students who qualify for admission to HE get admitted annually (Odhiambo 2016:198). A qualitative study by Tshabangu, Matakala and Zulu (2013:122) which involved a sample of 108 participants claims that the Namibia government has gradually reduced funding to higher education while enrolment and the cost of offering the education have sharply risen; as a result institutions have hiked fees tremendously to cover the costs in exclusion of vulnerable groups. The Sub-Saharan region has nevertheless doubled the participation of students at higher education in the period between 1992 and 2012 (Marginson 2016:249).

There are notable challenges to access to tertiary education and some are common in many countries globally. Emerging trend across continents is that participation in HE has grown faster than population growth and individual countries' gross domestic product (GDP) resulting in the inability for tertiary institutions to increase resources sufficiently to meet demands (Marginson 2016). For example, a literature study by Akin (2012:60) postulates that enrolments in Africa are on average 13.5% while resources have increased by only 4.1% annually. Marginson (2016:250) notes that Turkey leads this rapid HE participation with gross tertiary enrolment ratio (GTER) from 25% in 2000 to 69.4% in 2012. Subsequently, Akin (2012:60) claims that there is reduced public expenditure for HE as a result of mass participation. Tshabangu et al. (2013:123) assert that Namibia's higher education system is based on strong legislative and policy frameworks which support access and equity. However, a mismatch in economic growth and rising participation result in low participation of people from marginalised groups in higher education.

Lack of capacity of tertiary institutions has necessitated sustained use of meritocracy for selection which denies access for certain sectors of the population in each country. The universities' use of screening tests for selection leads to social class bias because, in addition to normal school attendance, well-off parents afford to pay for private tuition for their children to increase chances for their children to succeed (Akin 2012:55). Odhiambo (2016:197) argues that merit can be inherited given what social class one is born into, and in Kenya it is about being a male in a particular socioeconomic status, living in urban areas and so on. Danic (2015:79,80) notes that inequality of access exists in most countries including the Scandinavian countries as well as countries such as Japan, Italy and Germany and this is normalised by the way people from different social classes think about themselves and each other. In the USA access is restricted by funding, competition and the racialism. A literature study by Karkouti (2016:59) posits that universities and colleges use discriminatory selection criteria to discredit participation of minority groups in HE. Another literature study in the USA by Harper, Patton and Wooden (2009:397,399) indicates that progressive policy initiatives have been undermined by, among others, under-representation of Black students in predominantly white institutions, inadequate funding for historically black colleges and universities, and indiscriminate use of biased admission standards across the states' tertiary institutions.

As stated above, generally, access to HE is on the rise across the globe. The growth is tied to the economic development of individual countries concerned and their social policies on access and funding of HE. General challenges such as selection criteria for admission deny access to many qualifying candidates and these reflect individual countries' socioeconomic dynamics.

4.2 ACCESS TO HE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

4.2.1. An international perspective

Emerging international trends on access to HEIs are demonstrated through experiences of a selected number of countries. The USA has the oldest civil laws against discrimination of any kind and much is learnt from how the policies influenced access to education in practice. On the other hand, Norway is a Scandinavian country where the integration movement started in the 1960s, and there are important issues HE in Norway presents for learning as a country in which tertiary education is free. An intensive literature search using Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) and Google Scholar, also revealed studies about access to tertiary education in the

following countries: UK, Cyprus and Turkey. The studies were included to illustrate access to tertiary education internationally.

4.2.1.1 United States of America (USA)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), 34B(1), part 104 on Non-discrimination, outlines the following: Part 104.42(a) states that admissions shall not discriminate qualified persons on the basis of having a disability. Part 104.43(a) promotes equal participation, including, in, (c), all courses and programmes for which they qualify. Accordingly, part 104.44(a) describes special accommodations that HEIs may apply such as time extension to complete a programme, course substitutions and adaptation in teaching methodologies. Part 104.44(b) highlights the use of support devices including the use of audio recorders and guide dogs for people with visual impairments, and (c) accepting alternative methods of assessment. Section 504 mandates schools to facilitate access and protects the right to education for students with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, provides for non-discrimination against people with disabilities like the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 cited above. Title 42, chapter 126, section 12101(b), (1), (2) and (3) state the purpose of the law as to give national mandate on elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities with clear standards, and commits the Federal Government to play an active role of enforcing the law. As provided under Title III, no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability for participation in any public services including schools, and Title III also provides for access to public buildings for individuals with mobility challenges.

Although the United States of America pioneered access to HE for people with disabilities with laws protecting rights for students with disabilities to education, access to education for vulnerable groups is still not guaranteed to date. A review literature on factors that affect access to education for students with disabilities by Rothstein (1993:23-24) suggests four key issues critical for access and support for students with disability in the United States of America (USA): (a) The individual had to be identified as handicapped according to the statute (Rehabilitation Act of 1973:§706(7)[B]) which states that the impairment should significantly limit their daily functioning; (b) Such student should meet the entry requirements for the institution to which they

wish to be enrolled; (c) Since all colleges receive federal funding, they are subject to section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act that prohibits discrimination; (d) Accommodations made in programmes for students with disabilities should not alter their basic structure but make minor changes. In her review literature on historical and current perspectives on learning disabilities in the US Pullen (2016) suggests that regulations such as the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) give individual states basic minimum guidelines for disability support but give each state liberty to do more (Pullen 2016:31). On the other hand, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates learning institutions to make accommodations for students with disabilities without latitude (Pullen 2016:33).

A literature study by Gelbar, Madaus, Lombardi, Faggella-Luby and Dukes (2015:15) suggests that though section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disability Act of 1990 secure the right to education for students with disabilities, there is a mismatch between the number of students with disabilities in demand for HE and the number of institutions which have transformed to support them. The students continue to face problems such as inaccessible built environment, rigid curricula and negative attitudes from staff (Gelbar et al. 2015:16). Murray, Wren and Keys (2008) conducted a survey to assess faculty attitudes to students with learning disabilities at a private university in the Midwestern United States with a sample of 194 participants and found that lecturers get conflicted by the section 504 regulation as they have “...pressures to maintain the integrity of courses and programs while also providing for the unique learning needs of students” (Murray et al. 2008:97). The challenge is exacerbated by section (d), highlighted by Rothstein (1993), which says that they may not alter the basic structure of the programme. Since the regulation is not prescriptive, it may lead to differences in implementation. For example, lecturers who are misinformed about disability issues and show negative attitude allow minor accommodations, thus, constraining access to education (Murray et al. 2008:97). To some lecturers, accommodations discredit the value of programme (Gelbar et al. 2015:16). A qualitative study by Berggren et al. (2016:340,345) notes that although support systems for students with disabilities in the US are funded by the federal government, individual contexts such as a student’s socioeconomic background can also restrain access as tertiary education is expensive.

Generally, though countries such as the USA have well-known policies and legislation supporting the right to education for student with disabilities at all levels, implementation of these policies at institutional levels continue to face challenges. Individual socioeconomic as well as political contexts also influence access to HE.

4.2.1.2 Norway

Norway prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act No. 61 of 2013. Articles in Chapter 2 speak against discrimination on the basis of disabilities, explain differential treatment that is lawful and describes positive discrimination in creating access for students with disabilities. Article 17 of Chapter 3 on universal terms and individual adaptation describes the right to individual accommodation to enhance the students' teaching and learning experiences (Kingdom of Norway 2013).

A survey by Cameron (2016:24), that sampled 266 school district leaders, describes Norway as having the most accessible education system in the world for students with disabilities at the basic level of education. Another survey covering 1776 HE students in three largest universities in Norway, also states that access to university education is open except for programmes such as medicine where admission is competitive (Hovdhaugen 2009:4). Hovdhaugen (2009:14) also notes that though HE is accessible there is poor retention, few students complete their degrees. In assessing high attrition of students at Norwegian tertiary institutions, a literature study by Thomas and Hovdhaugen (2014) compared the Norwegian HE experience with that of England and Denmark and noted high retention of students at HE in England where students pay high fees and students remained in school in Demark which, similar to Norway, has tuition-free HE. Therefore, suggested reasons for poor retention in Norway include students' unique personal and socioeconomic contexts as well as parents' educational level (Hovdhaugen 2009:14).

Ebersold's (2012) study is a comparative analysis of results of a survey conducted in 2006/07 in four countries, namely, Denmark, Czech Republic, France and fifty-two students with disabilities as Norwegian participants in this longitudinal study. The results indicate that although 63% of the respondents said their access to tertiary education was very easy, support for their needs was not assured as universities and colleges mostly address physical accessibility and focus less on "pedagogical, psychological and social accessibility" (Ebersold 2012:88,89). Ebersold (2012:90)

further argues that disability support services at HE in Norway are under-resourced for students with comprehensive needs and students depend on support from peers because of delayed response to students' needs. A qualitative study by Brandt (2011) involving 19 students with disabilities and six disability service employees at four Norwegian HEIs confirms that there is inadequate support for students with disabilities. According to Brandt (2011:113-5) the following were some of the students' challenges: students who required study material in alternative formats did not get it on time; some students' requests for accommodations were met with suspicion; students had to advocate for their needs despite institutions knowing about their impairments and students' experiences differed according to departments in which they were enrolled and lastly, administrators did not always implement suggestions for adaptation from the Advisory Service for students with disabilities. Largely, though tertiary education is free students with disabilities in Norwegian HEIs face barriers which limit their chances for success.

4.2.1.3 United Kingdom (UK)

In the United Kingdom several policies prohibit discrimination and mandate institutions to provide information on how they facilitate support for students with disabilities. For example, the Equality Act in Part 6, chapter 2 and article 91 prohibits tertiary institutions to discriminate against persons with disabilities in their admission and manner of conducting their programmes (United Kingdom 2010). In addition, chapter 2 article 26(1), (2) of the Special Education Needs and Disability Act forbids discriminatory admission policies into institutions or programmes and outlaws exclusion on services offered which may disadvantage students with disabilities (United Kingdom 2001). Additionally, Disability Discrimination Act in chapter 50, Part IV and article 30 requires HEIs to: (a) "publish disability statements at such intervals as may be prescribed"; and (b) "include conditions relating to the provision made, or to be made, by the institution with respect to disabled persons" (United Kingdom 1995). Despite clarity of policy mandates practice within HE pose challenges.

There is a plethora of studies that review how nondiscriminatory policies, such as Disability Discrimination Act, influence how tertiary institutions facilitate access in the United Kingdom (UK). Madriaga et al. (2010) carried a survey in one tertiary institution to assess the learning and assessment experiences of 172 students with disabilities and 312 nondisabled students. They found that students with disabilities reported more difficulties on time limits set for assignments,

physically writing and reading and some of the students' problems were attributed to poor teaching approaches by lecturers. Additionally, the study claims that lecturers are reluctant to provide the students with notes or handouts after lectures or receiving such notes in appropriate formats (Ibid, 653). In a qualitative document analysis research Ralph & Boxall (2005:372) argue that the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) directs universities to make adjustments that ensure equity in education. Similarly, a qualitative research involving 504 students in tertiary education by Vickerman and Blundell (2010:23) reveals that the amendment act of DDA, Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (2001), mandates institutions to make anticipatory adjustments that include students with disabilities in their plans and reforms. The recommendation encapsulates the social model's idea that access initiatives should be proactive (Gibson 2012:355). However, Riddell and Weedon' (2014) report of a case study taken out of a longitudinal survey, involving several students and lecturers in four universities, concludes that although the mandate of the Disability Discrimination Act is understood, students with disabilities still have to buttress many challenges which reflect negatively on disability identity, and some lecturers, especially in vocational fields of study such as education, still question potential of students with disabilities in these careers. Vickerman & Blundell (2010:28) argues that the United Kingdom has good policies which have to be followed by appropriate training of staff to understand their responsibilities for making education accessible. Riddell and Weedon (2014:41) claim that though universities in the UK can benefit financially by producing evidence in their equity plans some students still hide their disability status to avoid discrimination. A survey conducted by Madriaga, Hanson, Kay and Walker (2011:903) which consisted of 484 participants of students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities argues that availability of a policy at national level does not automatically affect practice at HEIs; evidence at the UK universities suggests that students remain excluded by prevailing teaching and assessment practices. Kioko and Makoele (2014) conducted a qualitative study that involved seven participants, four students with disabilities and three lecturers from two Faculties. Findings of the study indicate that although lecturers are informed about students with disabilities in their classes, they lack disability-specific knowledge which would allow them provide appropriate support, hence the need to train staff to better facilitate access.

4.2.1.4 Cyprus

Part 1, 3(1) of The Persons with Disabilities Law states that persons with disabilities should receive equal treatment and should not suffer discrimination on grounds of their disability, while Part 4.(1) promotes the right to an independent living, full inclusion in society and equal participation in the financial and social life including, under Part 4(2)(b), access to personal support with assistive devices... providing an interpreter or helper, as well as other necessary support, and (d) accessibility to inclusive education according to the person's needs (Republic of Cyprus 2000). Furthermore, the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law, in Part II 3(1) promotes education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools that are accessible to avoid discrimination. To promote inclusive education, Part V 19(a) of the Law states that public schools shall have staff with "necessary teachers and other scientific (Psychologist, Speech Therapist, doctors, Physiotherapist and other) supporting and auxiliary staff" (Republic of Cyprus 1999). The question would be whether the policies reflect in practice.

Hadjikakou and Hartas' (2008) qualitative study which involved 10 students, 4 tutors and heads of 10 private tertiary institutions acknowledges the role of a disability policy in facilitating access but argues that policy alone does not promise access. Access is promoted by the right attitude from staff, proper training and experience on disability issues as well as a welcoming attitude from fellow able-bodied students. In another qualitative study conducted by Hadjikakou et al. (2010:412) involving 10 students with mobility challenges at four HEIs, the institutions did not have tutors for students with disabilities and the students received tutoring made for the rest of the students, and in some cases tutors are also lecturers. Therefore, support needs for the students are not met sufficiently, they have to adapt. The key challenge to giving support has been identified as institutions' lack of policies that describe how support should be offered. Furthermore, though the national policy in Cyprus mandates institutions to establish support structures, such structures do not exist, staff is ill-prepared to support students with disabilities and very few colleges employ qualified support staff such as Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and so on (Hadjikakou and Hartas 2008:110). Generally, implementation of the national policies faces challenges and students' choices of institution and programme of study in Cyprus are greatly influenced by their disability status.

4.2.1.5 Turkey

The Constitutions of the Republic of Turkey recognises education as a human right. Chapter 3, Part II in article 42, the constitution declares, “No one shall be deprived of the right of learning and education.” Another Turkish policy that is congruent with the mandate of the Constitution is the Disability Act No. 5378 of 2005, of which article 15 declares:

The right of education of the disabled people cannot be prevented by any reason. The disabled children, youngsters and adults are provided with equal education with the nondisabled people and in inclusive environments by taking the special conditions and differences into consideration.

However, policies and practices do not always complement each other. Results of a survey by Arslan-Ari and Inan (2010:40) covering 22 students with disabilities from five HEIs in Ankara, Turkey, indicate that the “needs and capabilities” of students with disabilities are generally ignored in the country. This neglect is coupled with poor resources and low participation and completion rate of students with disabilities at high school; “only 3% of individuals with disabilities earn a high school diploma” (State Institute of Statistics 2002 quoted by Arslan-Ari & Inan 2010:40). Another survey by Koca-Atabey et al. (2011:114) involving 70 students with disabilities from six universities, states that students with disabilities at HEIs in Turkey encounter more problems than their counterparts in developed countries because universities in Turkey are not resourced to support them. Koca-Atabey et al. (2011:115) also take a medical approach in which they blame students’ perception of their challenges as influencing the extent to which they develop resilience or vulnerability. In a qualitative study involving six students in two state universities Kayhan, Sen and Akcamete (2015:636) contend that the placement of disability units under departments not concerned with disability issues, and without independent budgets, negatively affects support for students with disabilities. There are no services organised to support their needs. Students with disabilities also have differentiated experiences of support as attention and support is biased from disability group to another (Kayhan et al. 2015:638).

4.2.2 Regional experiences of access

In the African context access to higher education is influenced by many socioeconomic conditions as evident in the literature. First, South Africa was selected because it provides a unique context where several policy documents were developed in the post-apartheid era to

address inequality, and higher education received attention of these policies. However, implementation of the policies still faces challenges. Next, three more countries were selected because of availability of research studies accessed through an intensive literature search using BASE and google search. Of these countries, Nigeria with its vast population and diversity gave an opportunity to learn from its experiences of access to tertiary education. The other two countries, namely, Tanzania and Kenya both have credible policies but with research reports providing contrasting practices with regard to opportunities for access. Conclusions drawn from their experiences need to be read cautiously as the studies may not be representative of available literature on access to education in the countries.

4.2.2.1 South Africa

South Africa has several policy documents that make reference to access to education at all levels of study, including tertiary level. First, the Higher Education Act of 1997 in section 37(1) recognises autonomy of higher education institutions to determine entry requirements into a programme and the number of admissible students, as long as the policy guards against discrimination and ensures equal access. Its promotion of equality fulfills Section 29.1 (a) of the South African Constitution which declares education as a human right and (b) states that everyone has a right “to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible” (Republic of South Africa 1996). Chapter 3(17.3) of the Further Education and Training Act of 1998 promotes non-discrimination, and in chapter 3(17.5), it also states that institutions should create access for persons with disabilities.

Next, Section 1.18 of the Education White Paper 3 promotes equity and requires that students with disability not only be admitted but supported to succeed in their studies. The policy also recognizes the need for financial support to vulnerable students without which opportunities for success would be limited (Department of Education 1997). The Education White Paper 6 builds on the mandate of White Paper 3 and recommends regional models of support in HE. It suggests that HE can efficiently support students with disabilities if tertiary institutions in one region could focus on facilitating access to one type of disability per institution (Department of Education 2001:28-29). This claim is supported by the Department of Higher education assertion that access for students with disabilities in South African universities is compromised by lack of commitment for support and fragmented nature of service across institutions (Department of

Higher Education 2013:45). Nevertheless, physical access is a requirement for all HEIs regardless of the presence of students with physical impairments in their programmes (Department of Education 2001).

Additionally, The National Plan for Higher Education states that there is insufficient data on access of students with disabilities at HEIs (Ministry of Education 2001:40). As a point of departure the National Plan for Higher Education requires HEIs to indicate, in their three-year plans, the extent to which vulnerable groups (women, black students and students with disabilities) would be enrolled and supported to complete their programmes (Ministry of Education 2001:45). The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training states that “...accurate and up-to-date data on the number of post-school students with disabilities is not available...” to influence appropriate plans for support (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) 2013:45). The declaration indicates that tertiary institutions do not comply with the National Plan for Higher Education policy which requires institutions to provide three-year plans with data. DHET (2013:45) expresses the need to determine “...the appropriateness of the education system and training being provided ... and the facilities and support services available to students and staff with disabilities in relation to individual requirements...” at HEIs in South Africa. The report of the DHET reveals noncompliance by HE on policy requirement presented above.

In this regard, several studies in South Africa reflect on the policy context and explain challenges that result from application of the policies. Matshediso's (2007) study is a literature review which critiques South Africa's development and implementation of disability policies from the 1990s. The study highlights challenges to access for students with disabilities in HEIs and claims that students with disabilities suffer the effects of exclusion at all levels of education. Students with disabilities were educated to a limited extent to pursue vocational rather than academic studies. Thus, access to HEIs is limited to a privileged few without institutions making attempts to broaden access. The national policies in the 1990s describe planning of education for students with disabilities as a challenge because of insufficient data on students with disabilities at HEIs in South Africa. However, after the 1997 report by National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) explained the extent of exclusion institutions of higher learning were still not bound to

accommodate students with disabilities, rather they were required to meet a minimum standard in physical access (Matshediso 2007:708-709) as spelt out in Education White Paper 6 (2001:31). Finally, Matshediso (2007:709) noted a lack of political will manifested in failure of both government and HEIs to outline strategies for change.

Tugli (2013) conducted a quantitative study on challenges and needs of students with disabilities in one university in Limpopo. The study sampled the whole population; all 132 students with disabilities participated in the study. From the sample, four disability groups were identified: 41% had mobility impairment, 29.9% had visual impairment, 13.4% had albinism and 4.5% had multiple disabilities. The findings of the study include: Majority of lecturers use teaching aids for students with disabilities; one out of three students felt that they were not given remedial lesson when they needed them, the claim that was refuted by some; students with visual impairment claimed that material transcribed in braille was delayed and some students claimed lecture and seminar halls were not accessible for mobility-impaired persons, etc.

Ngubane-Mokiwa (2013) studied the extent to which Information and Communication Technology could be used to address access needs of students with visual impairment studying at UNISA. This qualitative study used a purposive sample of five blind participants. Findings reveal that certain subjects such as Mathematics and Accounting had content which was inaccessible as JAWS could not read graphs, and since students with visual impairments could not study independently they felt helpless. Findings also show challenges of students not receiving study material in Braille on time but were expected to meet the same deadline as others. Students incurred costs of buying compatible software at high cost and usually felt excluded by tutors or lecturers who were oblivious of the needs of a visually impaired student in their classes.

A study by Engelbretch and De Beer (2014) used mixed method approach to recount experiences of students with physical challenges in a HEI in South Africa. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select 23 participants to respond to a questionnaire and from the same sample twelve interview participants were selected. The authors found the following barriers that hampered education of the physically impaired students at HEIs in South Africa: architectural access constraints, inadequate space in the library, parking access and request for

annual medical certificates. First, facilities used by mobility-challenged individuals are inaccessible such as doors that are either too narrow or too heavy to open and ramps that are too steep while some facilities are in bad state of repair. Second, students have to compete with ‘normal’ students for use of either library facilities or parking bays designated for people with disabilities. Last, physically challenged students are also requested to produce medical certificates annually though their conditions do not fluctuate, and this was compounded by the fact that the proof of impairment had to be produced for other services such as preparation for examination.

An extensive literature study on social justice and inclusive education conducted by Hay and Beyers (2011:236-237) supports these conclusions drawn from findings of Engelbrecht and De Beer’s (2014) study. People are not equal with regard to physical and personality characteristics but they all deserve respect in how they are deemed and treated. Another study by Ndlovu and Walton (2016:4) asserts that the good policy context in South Africa has not translated to tangible benefits for people with disabilities pursuing studies at HEIs. Notable challenges include lack of inclusive policies in some HEIs, inaccessible funding for disability units in HEIs to function effectively, inaccessible mode of transport for students with disabilities doing practical subjects to do fieldwork, and reluctance of some HEIs to transform and accommodate students with disabilities (Ndlovu and Walton 2016:5-6). Largely, South Africa developed policies meant to address inequalities in the education system but implementation of these policies faces challenges at institutional level.

4.2.2.2 Nigeria

The Integration of Persons with disability Bill of 2011 for the Federal Republic of Nigeria is direct and gives very clear mandate to institutions of learning and the public at large about the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, Part I (1) reads, “A person with disability shall not be discriminated against on the ground of his disability by any person or institution in any manner or circumstance whatsoever.” Part III (3) continues, “A person with disabilities shall have the right to access the physical environment and buildings on an equal basis with others”, and under (4) and (5) accessibility to public buildings through lift and pavements, sidewalks etc. are explained.

With regard to education the policy, in Part IX 22(1) states, “...every person with disability shall have an unfettered right to education without discrimination or segregation in any form”. Article 23(1) continues, “All public schools, whether primary, secondary or tertiary shall be run to be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities”. Accordingly every school shall have: (a) “...at least a trained personnel to cater for the educational development of persons with disabilities, (b) special facilities for the effective education of persons with disabilities”, and in section (2) it stipulates, “Braille, sign language and other skills for the communication with persons with disabilities shall form part of the curriculum of primary, secondary and tertiary education.” Some studies reviewed below cannot reflect the mandate of this policy as they were written earlier, but even recent studies fail to describe how this policy has facilitated access to HE for students with disabilities.

A literature study by Robert-Okah and Osiobe (2014:188) estimates that there are 19 million people living with different kinds of disabilities in Nigeria, but there is no documented evidence of their access to tertiary education. The study claims that there is near zero access to HE education by people with physical disabilities. However, other studies refute this claim. Ajuwon’s (2008:12-13) literature study posits that since the 1977 National Policy on Education in Nigeria there is increased enrolment of students with disabilities at tertiary education levels. A literature study by Abang (1988:76) states that the admission criterion at the University of Jos is based on merit, so if students with disabilities perform well in their studies they are likely to be admitted. The university also boasts of a variety of professionals readily available to meet needs of students with disabilities and equipment for the visually impaired (Abang 1988:76). However, Abang (1988:77) notes that students with disabilities in other HEIs in Nigeria face many barriers, including lack of teaching and learning aids. In addition, a literature study by Aja-Okorie (2014:358-359) reveals that gender disparity in Nigeria is well-established making females in vulnerable groups less likely to access tertiary education, thus, breaching the National Policy on Education (2004) principle that education at all levels is a right for all irrespective of gender. Smith (2011:43) also admits that women with disabilities in Nigeria are most likely to be uneducated, be abused and discriminated and have poor access to health care. The survey that covered 1093 people with disabilities in two states, Kogi and Niger, in Nigeria found that only 10% of the sample reached either secondary or tertiary schools level (Smith 2011:41). In a

literature study Eleweke (1999:232) claims that limited access to education for students with disability results from lack of specific legislation addressing how the students should be assessed, supported and to regulate resources essential for inclusive education at all levels of education. In general, research reflects various views about access to HE in Nigeria and in a country with such diversity, individual studies covering small samples may not give a definitive idea of access to tertiary education.

4.2.2.3 Tanzania

A new policy in Tanzania, Persons with Disability Act of 2010, sets clear mandate for learning institutions to create access for persons with disabilities. Part VII section 28(1) mandates every learning institution to refrain from discrimination of any kind to persons with disabilities. Part VIII sections 35, 37 and 38 advocate access to physical buildings, services and information respectively. The policy sets a mandate to which social institutions in Tanzania must meet for equity and nondiscrimination (United Republic of Tanzania (URT) 2010). According to Mwaipopo, Lihamba and Njewe (2011:418) the following policy documents in Tanzania commit government to support access to higher education for students with disabilities: The National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (URT 2005, 2010); The Education and Training Act of 1998 (URT 1998); The Higher Education Students' Loans Board Act of 2004 (URT 2004); and The National Higher Education Policy (URT 2007).

However, studies below give mixed experiences of access. For example, the National Policy on Disability of 2004 indicates that almost all schools are inaccessible despite the Education Policy making commitment to facilitate access for students with disabilities (United Republic of Tanzania 2004:5). The policy also notes that less than one percent of students with disabilities are enrolled in grade one at primary school level, and enrolment at secondary and HE is lower. This is despite research by Mwaipopo et al. (2011:417) indicating that the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania upholds the right of every Tanzanian citizen to pursue education in the field of their choice; and President Nyerere, in 1974, also endorsing the right of children with disabilities to access both regular and special education. Access to HEIs for persons with disability is negatively affected by low participation rates of students with disabilities at primary and secondary levels of education while those who attend are poorly supported leading high attrition (Mwaipopo et al. 2011:419-420). Among reasons cited for lack of support are lack of

training for teacher and inadequate financial resources to stimulate access. This influence is acknowledged by the National Policy on Disability cited above.

A study conducted by Morley and Croft (2011:388,390) claims that students enrolled at tertiary level face several barriers such as inaccessible physical environment at universities and unwelcoming attitudes of staff and fellow students without disabilities. These barriers limit opportunities for learning and positive experiences for students with disabilities. Tuomi, Lehtomaki and Matonya (2015) conducted a qualitative study that included six women with disabilities studying at tertiary level. The study notes a gross underrepresentation of females in education generally, influenced by culturally dictated gender roles (Tuomi et al. 2015:203). In addition, women with disabilities admitted in HEIs felt that the support they got was not only insufficient but skewed towards students with visual impairment (Tuomi et al. 2015:208). A Literature study by Komba (2009:13) mentions that out of 25000 students enrolled in 2006 at the Open University of Tanzania, 50 students had disabilities, blind/partially sighted, but it does not continue to describe if this was the only type of students with disabilities enrolled. The study maintains that such students had access to various forms of support. Though policy mandate seems clear about how institutions must create access, current studies describe gaps in knowledge of how students with disabilities are supported except for gender-based discrimination on access and one study citing that blind students are supported at one university.

4.2.2.4 Kenya

In the context of Kenyan policies on disabilities, a recently promulgated Persons with Disabilities Bill of 2015 repeals and replaces Persons with Disability Act of 2003. Part III of the Bill provides for the rights of persons with disabilities. In particular, section 25 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in public institutions and by private entities. Section 39 describes the Right to Education and mandates learning institutions to create access by providing necessary support to persons with disabilities. Section 39(7) elaborates: The Council in consultation with relevant Government establishments shall ensure that:

(a) learning institutions take into account the needs of persons with disabilities with respect to the set entry requirements, pass marks, curriculum, examinations, auxiliary

services, use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements and other similar considerations;

(b) learning institutions provide individualized support measures, appropriate equipment, assistive devices, adoptive technologies and other supportive services in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion of students with disabilities (Republic of Kenya 2015).

Additionally, a literature study by Kochung (2011:145) notes that in the context of Kenya the National Constitution forbids discrimination and there is the Persons with Disability Act of 2003 (now repealed) and the 2009 special education policy all adopted to address the challenges of access for students with disabilities (Kochung 2011:147; Opini 2012:66). The Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2015 cited above provides an even greater demand on HEIs in Kenya to facilitate access. Opini's (2012) research reports findings of a qualitative research conducted in Kenya in 2006 involving 20 female participants and four officers from two public universities. The study argues that education in Kenya is considered as key to national and personal development, but in practice cultural perceptions restrain females' opportunities for access and reduce them to marriage material. Majority of students with disabilities do not attend basic education, but those who do, face barriers in mainstream schools without support, and generally "disabled girls were underrepresented in the entire education system" (Opini 2012:75). Issues of gender inequality in access to education in Kenya compare well with Tanzanian experiences cited above. Kochung (2011:148) also notes that students with disabilities who meet entry requirements in Kenyan HEIs are not supported due to negative attitudes of lecturers and support staff. Challenges to access in Kenya include lack of training for staff on how to support students with disabilities and lack of professional support staff such as sign language interpreters, braille transcribers and so on. It is evident from literature cited above that though there are initiatives to make education accessible for people with disabilities in Kenya, there is dissonance between policy stipulations and practice in schools.

4.3 ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN LESOTHO

This section explains access to HE in Lesotho. First, are highlights of how the Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho influences access to education. Second, three more policies are described.

These explain basic principles of participation and nondiscrimination with regard to facilitating access to HE. Then a discussion on two studies on access to HE in Lesotho ensues.

4.3.1 The Constitution of Lesotho

Chapter II section 4.1(n) of the Constitution of Lesotho advocates freedom from discrimination as a virtue protected by law and section 18 of the same chapter elaborates on freedom from discrimination. However, the Constitution does not treat education as a human right, it falls under principles of state policy which are not enforceable by law. These principles appear in chapter III section 25, entitled application of the principles of state policy, and read:

These principles shall not be enforceable by any court but, subject to the limits of the economic capacity and development of Lesotho, shall guide ... in the performance of their functions with a view to achieving progressively by legislation or otherwise, the realization of these principles

Equality and justice in section 26 and provision of education in section 28 are all key principles not protected by law. Section 28(c) of the Constitution promotes access to higher education. Nevertheless, there are laws that have been developed in the country to protect the rights of vulnerable children.

4.3.2 The National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy 2011

The National Disability and Rehabilitation policy is a recently promulgated national policy framework to be adapted by various Ministries as necessary. Its main objective reads: “The policy is intended to be used as a guiding document for designing, implementing and evaluating generic, as well as disability-specific, public policies and programmes to ensure meaningful inclusion” (Kingdom of Lesotho 2011). Under Priority Policy Area 4: Education and Training, the policy outlines the following: Endorsement of access to education by promoting provision of education material in accessible formats throughout the levels of education system. It recommends development and supply of appropriate technological devices for students with disabilities and supports implementation of necessary accommodations in curricula delivery, etc. The access demands in the policy transcend classroom arrangements to psychosocial support and extra-curricular activities for students with disabilities. It is, therefore, the most encompassing policy framework in Lesotho. Earlier policy initiatives by the Ministry of Education and Training

were not as comprehensive as this policy, hence the need for transformation. Some policy initiatives by the Ministry of Education and Training on special education in Lesotho receive attention below.

4.3.3 Education Policy Initiatives

For the current study, two policy documents from the Ministry of Education and Training were examined to establish how they support access to HEIs in the country. They are: a) The Higher Education Act (2004), and b) The Higher Education Policy of 2013. The Higher Education Act 2004 influenced establishment of the Council on Higher Education which provides for creating access to HE for students with disabilities. Creating of access for students with disabilities is evident in the Higher Education Policy of 2013 promulgated as an instrument of the Ministry of Education and Training, and CHE to regulate provision of education at tertiary education level.

4.3.3.1 The Higher Education Act 2004

The effort to monitor access to HE in Lesotho was about six years in 2016. While Council on Higher Education as a regulatory body was established by the 2004 Higher Education Act (Kingdom of Lesotho 2004), the functioning of the Council was delayed with its first assessment report on HEIs released in 2012 (CHE 2012). Lesotho tertiary education has for many decades not been regulated. Given this long-lasting policy vacuum, it is not surprising that there is limited research on opportunities afforded to students with disabilities at tertiary education in Lesotho. The current study, therefore, was conducted at a critical time when policy and practice need to be reviewed to unearth access opportunities and challenges at this level of education. The promulgation of Higher Education Act 2004 and Higher Education Policy 2013 marked the beginning of making HE in Lesotho an accountable system. Prior to the two policies, access to tertiary education in Lesotho was not easily regulated. Part II section 5.1(a) of the Higher Education Act states that CHE shall oversee how higher education institutions implement the Higher Education Policy (HEP) (Kingdom of Lesotho 2004) but HEP was only approved by Cabinet in November 2013. Section 5.1(b) indicates that CHE shall publish information about the functioning of HEIs while section 5.1 (c) states that CHE shall encourage higher education institutions to create access for all students who qualify to study at that level. Section 31.1 of the Act gives senate of a HEI the mandate to develop its admission policy (Kingdom of Lesotho 2004). Conspicuously, section 31.2 reads: “The admission policy shall not discriminate with

respect to admission of persons to the higher education public institution on the ground of race, national, gender, religion or political affiliation”, the Act leaves disability as one of the social grounds for discrimination in admission. However, section 31.3 states that tertiary institutions must avail their admission policies to the public.

4.3.3.2 Higher Education Policy 2013

Higher Education Policy, which regulates access to education for public and private tertiary institutions, was only approved in November 2013, and notes the following about access to education for students with disabilities, “...relatively few learners progress through all stages of schooling and qualify for entry to higher education” (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:1). Several key issues are worth noting about the HEP in Lesotho. First, section 8.3 outlines the following as some of the barriers to access for higher education in Lesotho:

- Difficulty of obtaining information and applying to HEIs,
- Geographical centralisation of HEIs,
- Insufficient knowledge and skills to make a success of HE,
- Restrictions for prospective adult students,
- Limited accessibility for people living with disabilities,
- Inflexible rules for HE programmes,
- Limited number of places in local HEIs,
- Not enough bursaries/loans,
- Limited range of programme offerings (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:32).

The object of Higher Education Policy as stated in section 8.2.1 is to ensure that each and every Mosotho regardless of his or her economic circumstances or other characteristics, has an equal chance to participate and succeed in higher education (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:31). So the Council on Higher Education as it monitors implementation of HEP by HEIs will, as section 8.2.2 notes, “(a) research issues of equity and access in relation to higher education in Lesotho; and (b) Monitor participation and achievement in higher education by different groups or categories of Basotho” (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:32). Of particular note is section 8.3.5.2(c) in which CHE commits to “...monitor the efforts of HE institutions, both public and private, to accommodate students with disabilities” (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:36).

4.3.4 Research on Access to HE in Lesotho

There are only two studies referring to access to HEIs for students with disabilities in Lesotho. First, it is a survey by the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho that covered 13 HEIs registered under it. Findings from the survey highlights that many buildings at HEIs in Lesotho are not accessible and reveals that students with physical disabilities at the National University of Lesotho were not identified and not supported (CHE 2012:13). In the same vein, the Council for Higher Education in Lesotho (CHE 2012:13) indicates that access at HEIs in Lesotho is skewed towards visual impairment with little done to restructure higher education to be accessible for people with other impairments including physical disabilities (Kingdom of Lesotho 2013:36). For example, in 2011 only two higher education institutions out of 13 had enrolled a total of ten (10) students with disabilities. This number accounted for 0.09% of an age group of 18-35 persons with disabilities who could benefit from tertiary education, and it is only 0.02% of tertiary student population in Lesotho (CHE 2012:13). This indicates a very low level of access given international regional percentage of adults with HE qualifications which averaged 3.94% for the world in 2010 and .78% for Sub-Saharan Africa (Odhiambo 2016:198). According to Ministry of Finance and Development planning (2009:115) 3.6% of adults with disabilities had post-secondary education qualification in Lesotho against 8.3% of adults without disabilities. Thus, having a disability lowers a person's chances of getting a HE qualification. Access to HEIs in Lesotho is further limited by resources that are reported to be inaccessible for mobility-challenged individuals (Council on Higher Education, 2012). The Council on Higher Education (2012) report states that almost half (47.5%) of the institutions indicated that many of their buildings such as lecture rooms, libraries, science and computer labs were inaccessible; thirty percent of the institutions felt that some facilities could be reached by wheelchair while a mere 15% said they were all accessible.

A qualitative study by Matlosa and Matobo (2007) which examined access constraints faced by the visually and hearing impaired students at HEIs is one of the only two studies on access to tertiary education in Lesotho. The study indicates that although the National University of Lesotho admits students with visual impairments, they are only admitted in programmes that do not require Mathematics and Statistics; there are insufficient ICT resources as demonstrated by presence of one computer with internet connection in Special Education Needs Unit, used by five visually impaired students who also did not have reference books in electronic version or braille

from the library; further, lecturers were ignorant about the needs of visually impaired students and used teaching methodologies that excluded the students; and students audio-record lessons for themselves and transcribe them later into braille (Matlosa and Matobo 2007:202). Wilson-Strydom (2011:409) observes that the extent to which one applies effort or shows capabilities is affected by whether the programme addresses their needs or they enrolled in it as a ritual to fulfill public expectation. Studies on access to education in Lesotho indicate that the students enrolled at various programmes in these institutions must struggle by themselves and overcome certain barriers posing challenges to their learning.

4.4 SUMMARY

Research indicates that, globally, many people have had access to tertiary education recently. There are many factors that influence trends in providing access to education across the world. For the USA, legislation that give rights to minority groups promoted access, in countries such as Denmark and Norway it is free tuition which attracts students to participate. However, Africa is comparatively below; gender and other socioeconomic factors influence access negatively. Countries with tuition free HE such as Norway struggle with retention of students to complete their degrees because of, among others factors, lack of support to students with disabilities.

Participation of persons with disabilities in HE is also on the rise, but comparatively lower than that of nondisabled peers. Countries across the world have regulated how access to education should be facilitated. The USA policies are said to have influenced policies of some European countries. Policies across the globe do indicate that persons with disabilities should not be discriminated. The UK provides incentives for institutions to keep records of how they support the students, and what plans are in place to enhance the support. While some countries have one or two disability policies that comprehensively describe how access should be provided for, South Africa seems to have too many and critiques argue that none of available policies is prescriptive and definitive about what institutions should do. Despite each country under review having clear policies, research on access reveals that a policy is only one requirement for access. Other requirements such as staff development and restructuring of resources need to be given equal attention for HE to facilitate meaningful participation and achievement. Lesotho's constitution does not regard education as a human right but recent legislations such the National Disability Act and Higher Education Policy do protect persons with disabilities against

discrimination, and require institutions to create accessible environment for individuals with disabilities. One of the major tasks of the Council in Higher Education as explained by the Higher Education Policy is to ensure equity in provision of HE in Lesotho. Literature in Lesotho, like it is in Nigeria and other countries, does not reflect how HEIs should implement anti-discrimination policies and facilitate access, hence the significance of the current study.

Research on access to education at HE clearly demonstrates that there is an incomplete understanding of how access for students with disabilities should be facilitated, hence they are mostly denied opportunity to study certain programmes. Students are admitted selectively while certain programmes remain rigid, thus, promoting a perception of access as admission in programmes where students can adapt themselves to set standards, some studies reveal that the experiences of students with disabilities continue to be ignored. The current study set out to explore the views of students and other participants on access to programmes that students enrolled in. It explains participants' views on how they wish the programmes would change to create opportunities for better participation by students with disabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present the research methods for this study. I saw it fit to begin with a clarification of the paradigm that underpins this research so as to help the reader understand my view of reality and how it can be understood. This is important as it has influenced my choice of methods and processes I followed in this research. I will then present the research approach, design, data collection methods and analysis. The penultimate section covers the research ethics I took into consideration in order to protect the rights of participants. In the last section I then present the mechanisms I used to enhance the quality of the data and the findings.

5.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The study adopted a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm which is based on the notion that “...knowledge is actively constructed by individuals in interaction with the environment and with others” (Castle 1997:55). In Morgan’s (2014:38) terms, this paradigm assumes that “...everyone has unique experiences and beliefs, and no reality exists out of those perceptions”. Therefore, truth and knowledge are relative and discovered through engagement with participants while the researchers’ values are acknowledged as contributing to facilitation of knowledge production. This paradigm is “...concerned neither with prediction nor control but rather narrative descriptions and explanations” (Lincoln & Lynham 2011:5) of people’s lived experiences.

This paradigm is in line with the principles of both the social model and social constructionism I adopted as theoretical lenses for this study. Similarly, an interpretivist perspective aims to uncover meaning of “...lived experience from the point of those who live it” (Andrade 2009:43). Research from this paradigm perceives the researcher as a facilitator who helps research participants uncover their socially constructed reality. In questioning the status quo of oppression for people with disabilities, the social model advocates for restructuring of the environment to accommodate their needs while social constructionism promotes empowerment of people with disabilities to challenge ideology about disability and give new dialogue, meaning and value to disability status as they strive for the right to access and support in education.

5.1.1 Ontological assumptions

Hays and Singh (2012:34) define ontology as the perception of reality, the extent to which a research paradigm believes reality can be studied objectively or whether it is subjective. A constructivist/interpretivist paradigm approaches reality as relative, "...there can be no objective truth" (Guba & Lincoln 2001:1). There are multiple realities that reflect various experiences and beliefs of different people (Morgan 2014:38). Therefore, views about access to tertiary education for students with disabilities may differ from one participant to the next.

5.1.2 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology explains the process through which knowledge is acquired (Hays & Singh 2012:35). Within the constructivist/interpretivist perspective the researcher personally engaged with participants as a vehicle through which their unique perspectives on reality were unearthed. Reality was co-created when both the researcher and research participants interacted and the findings reflect lived experiences of participants (Andrade 2009:44).

5.1.3 Methodological assumptions

The purpose of the study was to understand specific contexts within which participants explain their lived experiences. The focus of the study was inductive, that is, it made participants' construction of their reality central and was not prescriptive (Creswell & Clark 2011:42). In this regard, I interacted with participants who shared their social world and their perspectives generated data for this study (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:56). As the researcher, I collected data personally using open-ended and non-directional questions to stimulate participants to share their thoughts and experiences of access to education at the institution so as to enable the study to draw conclusions based on personal and shared understanding of their lives (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:56; Creswell, 2014:9). Constructivist/interpretivist paradigm is informed by the hermeneutic, dialectical methodology which required me to give room for diversity of opinions and to interpret data in a way that reflects how participants perceived their world (Bryman 2012:28; Denzin & Lincoln 2005:184,204).

5.1.4 Axiological assumptions

Within this paradigm, the influence and value of the researcher are acknowledged because reality is co-created (Creswell & Clark 2011:43). A study adopting the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm should address how continuous interaction of the researcher's and participants' values, in the social inquiry, should be acknowledged and their influence managed (Chilisa & Kawulich

2012:56). In the current study, first I had to strictly follow the ethical protocol, one way of acknowledging the value-laden nature of my study was to discuss the concept of trustworthiness. The axiological assumptions are discussed in details in the sections Ethical Consideration (5.2.5) and Trustworthiness (5.2.6) below.

5.1.5 Research Approach

This study used a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. I found the approach most suitable to use for investigating access to higher education among students with disabilities in Lesotho as it emphasizes studying human action from the “insiders’ perspective” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:53), with the ultimate goal of understanding and explaining it. It gives no room for prediction. Using a qualitative method kept my commitment to interact with the social world of the participants and to adopt their understanding of it (Bryman 2012:399). As Morgan (2014:47) opines qualitative research “...is typically inductive, subjective, and contextual” and embodies the constructivist/interpretivist paradigms’ concept of relativism, reality and truth as co-creation of the researcher and participants. The method enabled me to give rich descriptions of the context (Guba & Lincoln 1994:106) within which students with disabilities at one institution in Lesotho learn. Participants also explained if they were aware of policies which influenced institutional practices.

The inductive nature of qualitative research to knowledge development (Imenda & Muyangwa 2006:6) ties with IPA principle of maintaining openness to unanticipated ideas and refraining from channeling outcomes of the study (Smith 2004:43). Given that the social constructionism challenges persons with disabilities to question existing social ideology, qualitative approach gave me the platform to interact with participants openly and allow them to reflect on how they experienced their world. Hays and Singh (2012:5) posit that qualitative research is not a linear but recursive process; it involves going back and forth in studying, re-examining and verifying data. Once I had transcribed data, it was sent back to research participants who engaged once more with information they shared with me and gave me permission to use it as a genuine reflection of their experiences. As Guba and Lincoln (1994:107) also note, “...findings are created through [repeated] interaction of inquirer and phenomenon”, I discovered how participants experienced their natural world, understood themselves, each other and their context

(Hays & Singh 2012:6). I also learned how their experiences influenced the way they evaluated themselves.

An interpretative phenomenological analysis was adopted for this study. As the ontological assumption for this study states, truth has multiple layers and reflects individual realities of people concerned and this approach helped in explaining the nuances in participants' views. Phenomenology "discover[s] and describe[s] the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences or knowledge as it appears to consciousness" (Hays & Singh 2012:50). Hays and Singh (2012:50) argue that human experience can be understood better if researchers question their individual values and pre-conceived notions of a phenomenon and reserve them in order to allow a fresh perspective from the participants. This process of refraining from using one's judgment while investigating new knowledge is termed *epoche* (Hays & Singh 2012:50). As stated by the epistemological assumption of this study, the findings presented in the next chapter reflect knowledge that is co-created by the researcher and participants, and truth lies within this engagement, and not objectively outside their context.

Phenomenology, as the study of people's understanding and feelings of their reality (Guest, Namey & Mitchel 2013:10), also depicts Foucault's argument that we should refuse credulous acceptance of imposed self-concept. The study's findings express how a tertiary institution met what Claiborne et al. (2011:514) called 'self-defined needs'. An interpretivist approach shares similar sentiments with phenomenology in that researchers cannot remove participants' subjectivity and contextual influences on the outcomes of a study, but goes further to highlight interference of researchers' evaluations of the phenomenon (Walliman 2011:74,76). In addition Hays and Singh (2012:191) state that interpretivism sees no knowledge as neutral because the standards used to control validness of research results are developed by people and reflect a certain form of subjectivity.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is influenced by phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith 2011:9). As researchers try to capture the lived experiences of participants, Smith (2011:10) opines that IPA involves a double hermeneutic. As a researcher I make an effort to understand participants whose self-understanding is also not complete but is evolving. The researcher tries to make sense of participants who are also trying to make sense of their lives. This approach resonates with the social constructionist perspective which challenges

people with disabilities to assess themselves, the way people perceive them and their role in society and to question the validity of those narratives. Smith (1996:264) goes on to say, the researcher does not have a complete access to participants' world without using his or her own understanding (interpretive ability) to decipher it. Using my values to influence my interaction with participants concurs with constructivist/interpretivist paradigm, namely, knowledge is not neutral or value-free, but develops from social engagement. Smith (2004:41) also notes that IPA focuses on individual cases; one incident is studied, then another and only when all cases are completed can a researcher look for points of similarities and differences. Meaning is built from the bottom upward rather than focusing on the global context from the start (Shaw 2010:177).

5.1.6 Research design

A case study design was adopted for this study. According to Berg and Lune (2012:325) case study entails a choice of what is to be studied. One higher education institution in Lesotho was selected to study and describe how its practices and policies affect education of students in three areas of disabilities, namely, vision, hearing and physical. The current case study is an intensive exploration of a unit of study typified by the institutional policies, process and practices as context (Babbie & Mouton 2001:281). It scrutinized multiple perceptions, within an institution of higher learning as a unit, in order to understand "...the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours" (Babbie & Mouton 2001:281). Berg and Lune (2012:325-326) outline two critical issues that add value to make research a case study, namely, that case studies use multiple data sources to give an in-depth exploration of a problem, and there should be an overarching event or setting which binds the study together as one case. The current study focused on a tertiary institution as a unit of analysis and examined policies and practices which influence access to education for students with disabilities. In doing so the study used the following as data generation sources, semi-structured interviews, a focus-group discussion, pictures and documents analysis (Nieuwenhuis 2007:75). The use of various data sources allowed the subject matter to be explored through several lenses (Baxter & Jack 2008:544).

A single case study design was most appropriate for this study because I wanted to capture the typical everyday life experiences of students with disabilities studying at an institution of higher learning (Bryman 2012:70). Yin (2009:48) argues that a representative or typical case "capture[s] the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" with

possibilities of deriving a wealth of “...experiences of the average person or institution”. A choice of one institution was also influenced by the two theoretical lenses of this study, namely, social model and social constructionism. A single case study allowed me to describe how the physical, social and policy contexts at the institution facilitated access to education and helped explore ideological perceptions which influenced the institutional practices and subsequent students’ experiences. Additionally, researching on one institution and selecting only 26 participants allowed sufficient opportunity for me to engage with participants and explore how they make sense of their lived experiences (Smith 2004:40). Leedy and Ormrod (2010:137) observe that every detail about the case is important to build a proper context for research consumers to draw their conclusions. That is, the focus on various sources of data enabled the study to compare perspectives and for information from different sources to cross validate (Baxter & Jack 2008). The distinct areas of focus such as staff perspectives and experiences of students with disabilities made up an embedded case design that contributed valued insights for understanding how access is facilitated at the selected institution (Yin 2009:52).

5.2 RESEARCH METHODS

5.2.1 Research location

The institutional calendar of 2006/2007 states that the institution was established in 1945 and has since gone through several phases of transformation and name changes. When founded in April 8, 1945, it was a faith-based institution affiliated to the University of South Africa as the institution conferring certificates. After its transformation to be a non-denominational institution it worked as the main tertiary institution for Lesotho and conferred degrees for the first time in 1967. On the 20th October 1975 the institution was established through the Lesotho Interim National Assembly Act no. 13 of 1975 (Institutional Calendar 2006/2007:1-2). The institution admits 43.9% of the country’s undergraduate student population and an even higher percentage, 89.4%, of postgraduate student population; the total number of students enrolled at the institution in 2011/2012 academic year was 11363 (Council on Higher Education Lesotho 2012:9).

5.2.2 Sampling procedure

5.2.2.1 Target population

Walliman (2011:185) sees the meaning of the term population as not limited to a number of people the study wants to cover, but a word that explains “...the total quantity of cases of the

type which are the subject of your study". In the context of this definition then, the population of the current study consists of all students with disabilities at HEIs in Lesotho. These include students with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities and those with other health-related challenges such as cancer, HIV and chronic diseases at tertiary institutions in Lesotho. It also includes all staff working in support of academic and psychosocial wellbeing of students with challenges at HEIs in Lesotho.

5.2.2.2 Sampling

Being qualitative in nature, this study adopted a non-probability sampling as a suitable sampling technique and ideal for recruiting participants that would provide relevant data for the context of the study (Guest et al. 2013:47). The study used three forms of non-probability sampling, namely, convenience, purposive and snowballing. I used convenience sampling to select an institution where I work, because it was accessible and request for permission to conduct research was readily approved (Bryman 2012:201). The selected institution was also the preferred institution for my study because it is the oldest and biggest public tertiary institution also known to be the only institution that has resources for students with visual impairment (Council on Higher Education 2012). Using purposive sampling I established clear selection criteria for who or what information would provide experiences of access to education at the institution. I identified university departments, such as the Academic Department (processing applications and academic results), Department of Student Affairs (addressing student welfare) and Faculty of Education (as the faculty under which special education needs unit was housed), that were likely to provide information for my study, and I also requested them to share documents which explain how students with disabilities were supported.

5.2.2.2.1 Sampling of students

With respect to students, purposive and snowballing approaches were used to select a student living with one or more of the three identified disabilities. The following criteria guided recruitment procedures for students: (a) 18 years and/or above; (b) registered in any field of study; (c) interested in participating and being interviewed for the study; (d) having visual, hearing or physical disability. Only three categories of disabilities were included in view of keeping the number of participants appropriate for case study design adopted for this research. Gender, ethnicity, year of study or other marks of population grouping were not used as selection criteria because the study sought to explain access to education as viewed by a student living

with a disability. A total of four students were identified purposively by approaching the Special Education Needs Unit (SENU) and requesting participation of students served under it.

The use of snowball sampling technique was inevitable given that the academic office could not provide a record of registered students with disabilities, and SENA could identify only four but admitted outright that he knew students who self-referred. The DSA could not help either. The difficulty of identifying student participants with disabilities studying at the institution was anticipated given that Council on Higher Education (2012:13) found that there were students with disabilities studying at the institution whom the institution had no records of. Therefore, in line with the snowball sampling technique, participating students identified through purposive sampling suggested names and contact details of students with disabilities they knew but were not using SENU to me. Other students were referred to me by staff at MIES (institute running part-time programmes for the institution). A total of seven students with disabilities were identified through snowball sampling.

5.2.2.2.2 Sampling of staff

Both purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to select staff for this study. All academic support staff, namely, SENA, Admissions Officer, Library staff, Counsellor and Social Welfare Officer were selected through purposive sampling. Snowballing was used to select 10 lecturers to participate in the study as the students were asked to suggest names of tutors or lecturers who supported them.

5.2.2.2.3 Sampling of Documents/Photos

The academic department suggested that documents on how education support for students with disabilities must be provided would be found in the Faculty of Education. Therefore, I purposively sought all documents related to special education needs support from the Dean, Faculty of Education and SENA as documented evidence of institutional practices on facilitating access to education. Then, using snowballing, I also took photos of places that participants, during interviews, referred to as either accessible (such as the first floor of the library) or inaccessible. The following are some of the places known to create barriers: students complained about closed overhead bridges, insufficient lights on the streets, potholes and so, on while one staff member talked about inaccessible offices (academic and bursary departments) and another member of staff mentioned that the clinic was inaccessible.

5.2.2.3 Recruitment of participants

Each participant was told that they were at liberty to participate or decline. One of the four students with physical disabilities refused to participate. I did not ask her for reasons of refusal as I made it explicitly clear that participation was voluntary. Each participant willing to participate was asked to suggest a date and place that would be convenient for an interview.

5.2.2.3.1 Recruitment of students

Three of the four students who used SENU were asked to invite peers with disabilities who were willing to participate, to meet me. Additionally, staff at institute for the part-time studies also spoke to four students with disabilities who were interested to participate, and later gave me their contact details. Each participant who was identified through snowballing was contacted to explain how his or her personal details were acquired, explain the purpose of the meeting and ask if they were willing to meet me again for an interview. We then set a date for an interview in the place most convenient for the participant. At the end of individual interviews students were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group interview, and those who agreed were contacted with suggestions for dates and time which was convenient.

5.2.2.3.2 Recruitment of staff

Similarly, I went to the office of every member of staff to explain my study, how they were identified and to ask if they were willing to participate. Then a date was set for an interview with each member of staff in their respective offices.

5.2.2.4 Study Sample

The study secured participation of eleven students and fifteen staff members. Details of the participants are shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below. Table 5.1 shows a list of participating students as well as their demographic details. Pseudonyms were created to protect the identity of the students.

Table 5.1: Student Participants						
Name	Disability Category	Male	Female	Age	Programme	Year level
Thomas	Blind	1	-	29	Bachelor of Education	3
Keletso	Partially sighted	-	1	22	BA Social Work	4
Thabo	Partially sighted	1	-	24	Bachelor of Education	1
Lerato	Physical Disability	-	1	27	B.Sc. Consumer Science	2
Raphael	Physical Disability	1	-	27	BA Social Work	3
Katleho	Partially Sighted	1	-	29	Diploma in Mass Communication	3
Norma	Blind	-	1	47	Postgraduate Diploma in Education	1
Karabo	Physical Disability	1	-	33	BA in Adult Education	1
Lineo	Physical Disability	-	1	22	Diploma in Business Management	2
Motse	Physical Disability	1	-	29	Diploma in Adult Education	3
Thetso	Deaf	-	1	37	Diploma in Pastoral Care	1

Table 5.2 presents the job descriptions as well as the gender and number of staff participants. References to staff participants in the next chapters is made through their faculty, department or job titles such the Faculty of Education (FED) Lecturer, Social Work (SW) Lecturer or the Counsellor. Where there are two participants sharing a title (FED, SW, IEMS) numbers are used consistently with a particular participant. For example, FED Lecturer 1 is called so in every reference to their speech or views.

Table 5.2: Staff participants

Job description of participants	Number of participants	Male	Female
Faculty of Education (FED) Lecturers	2	1	1
Faculty of Humanities (FOH) Lecturers	1	1	0
Faculty of Social Sciences Lecturers: Sociology, Social Work, and Business Administration	4	2	2
Faculty of Science Lecturers: Consumer Science	1	0	1
Institute of Extra-mural Studies (IEMS) Lecturers	2	1	1
Library Staff	1	1	0
Welfare Officer	1	1	0
Counsellor	1	0	1
Admissions officer	1	0	1
Special Education Needs Assistant (SENA)	1	1	0
Total	15	8	7

5.2.3 Data Collection

In line with case study, which encourages the use of various data collection methods, I chose four methods of data collection, namely, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, documents and picture analysis. Data collection began in May, 2015 and concluded at the end of September, 2015. Congruent with the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm's position that reality is subjective and embedded within people's discourse, data came from participants' views and perceptions on the extent to which tertiary education is accessible to students with disabilities.

5.2.3.1 Data collection methods

5.2.3.1.1 Data collection from students: Interviews

Hugh-Jones (2010:77) states that semi-structured interviews entail preparing interview questions in advance but leaving possibilities for the research participants to raise issues unexpected by the researcher. In line with the IPA as a qualitative orientation, interview questions were open-ended "...which lead to the collection of expansive data" (Smith 2004:43). The semi-structured interview was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed participants to respond to questions liberally while giving the researcher ample opportunity to gather participants'

additional insight on the topic (Morgan 2014:54). The social model as inspired by critical theory supports empowerment of minority groups by giving them platform to air their views as they redirect their destiny.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all eleven students. This acted as platform to voice how they experienced their education and suggested how their education should change to address their needs. All participants shared their views in semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 1 hour each. I used interview schedules that entailed open-ended questions derived from the aim and objectives of the study as a way to stimulate the discussion on current practices and policies which facilitated access to education for students with disabilities at the institution, and to explain how such practices and policies could be improved. The schedules addressed the following objectives of the study:

1. To explore and describe practices and policies in place to facilitate access to higher education for students with disability in Lesotho.
2. To describe challenges experienced by students with disabilities studying at higher education institutions in Lesotho.
3. To suggest ways in which practices and policies may be improved to facilitate access to higher education for students with disabilities.

Participants were given opportunity to use either Sesotho or English as two official languages in Lesotho; all but two student participants used English. Participants who used English for the interview also code-switched, occasionally, when they could not find the right English words to express themselves. On the other hand, I was helped by a sign language interpreter to interview a deaf student. I explained to the sign language interpreter all ethical considerations so that her participation in interpreting was also voluntary. The deaf student was asked to read the aim and objectives of the study and details about other rights including the right to withdraw. As an individual who lost hearing after completing her high school but can still speak, she personally read the information sheet and consent form and explained that she understood and was agreeable to participate. I also discussed shared confidentiality with the participants as an extra participant was involved in the study by virtue of being the interpreter. All students signed consent form before the interview could proceed. Some interviews with students took place in various places; six were conducted in my office, four in the students' homes and one at the

student's work. All interviews were audio recorded with participants' consent. The two interviews conducted in Sesotho were transcribed and translated into the English Language and, as part of member-check, participants were asked to verify if certain English words captured the meaning they expressed in Sesotho.

5.2.3.1.2 Data collection from students: Focus Group Discussion

Gibson and Riley (2010:61) describe a focus group as an unstructured discussion between four to eight people that share common qualities and identity. Babbie (2014:329-330) notes that besides using relevance as criterion, participant selection does not follow any probability sampling as the group does not resemble any meaningful population. Focus Group Interviews offer a more naturalistic environment in which participants can relax, better than conversations on a one-to-one basis with a stranger, and offer an opportunity for a wider coverage of the topic as participants can ask each other follow-up questions and critique each other's views (Gibson & Riley 2010:61-62).

Qualitative research reveals multiple layers of reality best understood by the actors within a context and Focus Group Interviews or Discussions (FGI/FGD) serve to "...add richness and new perspectives to the data" (Perlesz & Lindsay 2003:29) collected from individual interviews. Focus Group Interviews complement individual interviews in that they are able to generate ideas that mirror a social context (Breen 2007:466) as a group provides safety-net for members to express anxiety-provoking or unpopular ideas (Lederman 1990:118). Lederman (1990:120) notes that the exchange of ideas in FGI stimulates new thoughts and reflections that an individual interview may not give and the data it generates becomes the "voice" of participants.

A group of five students who participated in individual interviews were selected conveniently to partake in a focus group discussion using an interview schedule attached as Appendix III at the end of the study. It was easy to convene them together as they all studied at the university full-time and all except one stayed on campus. A focus group discussion was made of two students with physical and three with visual impairments all of whom studied fulltime at the selected institution. The purpose was to stimulate further discussions on experiences shared in individual interviews as FGD are known to add dynamism to content participants share individually (Babbie, 2014:330), and to explore how participants would share their unique challenges or support other's experiences as they collectively built meaning of their experiences (Bryman,

2012:504). Five of the remaining six student participants studied part-time and attended classes either on weekends or once a month at the institution's satellite campus (MIES), hence it was not possible to secure convenient time for all to make the second focus group discussion. Before the beginning of the discussion, I requested participants to audio-record the interview and also explained the issue of shared confidentiality so that they could understand their responsibility to keep information shared by their peers confidential to respect each other's opinions. The focus group discussion was tape recorded, and it took an hour and 10 minutes. All students' contributions were made in the English Language.

Participants were given opportunity to withdraw if they either felt that confidentiality was threatened or if they could not be faithful to the confidentiality agreement they signed (Berg & Lune, 2012:189). I facilitated the FGD and asked participants to raise their hands for contribution; as participants raised their hands I called their names so that Thomas knew who was speaking and to regulate participation and minimise dominance of one person. Initially, one participant, namely, Lerato, did not participate unless asked to and her contribution was minimal. However, she participated with relative ease as the FGD continued and subsequent questions were asked.

5.2.3.1.3 Data collection from staff: Interviews

Interviews with all staff took place in their offices, and they were also audio-recorded. Similar to interviews with students, staff signed consent forms before the start of the interviews. I used an interview schedule that captured objectives of the study and the questions were open-ended, thus, allowing participants to express themselves freely on the subject under discussion. Although questions in semi-structured interviews are prepared in advance, divergence from the schedule was allowed mainly because interviews elicit participants' subjective interpretations of reality and are not 'fact-finding' initiatives (Hugh-Jones 2010:79). In the current study, I asked follow-up questions on issues that formed each participant's experience and focus so as to elicit clarity. Hugh-Jones (2010:79) posits that designing questions before the interview is the researcher's commitment to stay focused on the participant's agenda rather than trying to predetermine the outcome of the interview. Similar to interviews with students as explained above, each interview took approximately one hour.

5.2.3.1.4 Document analysis

Hays and Singh (2012:284-285) state that written material can be very essential when used as a secondary source that triangulates data from interviews or when researching a topic which participants may feel less free to discuss in public. Documents can be of great value in showing change in participants' personal feelings and perceptions over time recorded at ease (e.g. personal diaries). Public documents can record a collective perception of progress and reflections on access through minutes of meetings, annual projections and policy stipulations. Document analysis as a data gathering approach uses all written documents, whether published or unpublished, which provide information on the topic of research and these include: "memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, letters, reports, email messages, newspapers articles" etc. (Nieuwenhuis 2007:82).

The researcher used purposive sampling to secure primary documents within the university; that is, the first hand record of meetings, (Nieuwenhuis 2007:83) and memoranda communicating decisions of the institutional management at different levels. The documents were requested mainly from two offices, the Special Education Needs Unit and the office of the Dean, Faculty of Education as the host of the former. The Faculty of Education administration office provided me with a file which had records of all official documents and communication on special education issues at the university. Authenticity of the documents was checked on the basis of each bearing signatures of correspondents and date stamps which corresponded with either time of writing or receiving the document. Additionally, some documents which communicated approval of programmes and decisions taken by senior management were verified by checking corresponding documents in the responsible offices. Documents provided by the two offices included two consultancy reports on establishment of a Special Education Centre or Department and official memoranda communication on special education issues. I read all documents in order to select those that were relevant to address the purpose of the study. Data generated from document analysis was very important to the study as some memoranda confirmed experiences students shared in individual and focus group interviews. Documentation gave additional data which both FGD and individual interviews could not provide. Hard copies of memoranda used as data will be submitted to the supervisor for verification, but cannot be appended as they bear names and identities of staff at the institution.

5.2.3.1.5 Photo analysis

Lastly, photos which depict visual evidence of physical access for mobility-challenged students were taken around campus and described. The images were used to explain the physical make-up of the institution and how it affected access. Research states that images can effectively supplement textual material (Gibson & Riley 2010:74) to depict issues that cannot be effectively put into words. Guest et al. (2013:239) concur that photos add meaning and depth that surpasses meaning that words can make. Picture analysis was included as additional data to interviews, FGD and documentation. Data from analysis of participants' experiences, students with mobility impairments, blind students, and views of some members of staff (SW Lecturer 2, FED Lecturer 1, Librarian) showed how environment enabled or brought challenges to students with disabilities. Pictures used in this study explain how storey buildings are accessed and how resources, such as paving or potholes influenced students with mobility impairments to access the campus.

5.2.4 Data analysis methods

Data analysis reveals key findings reflected as patterns of information provided by research participants. As Babbie (2014:409) sees it, data coding is central to discerning these "...patterns that point to a theoretical understanding of social life". As influenced by phenomenology and interpretative approaches, the study used the two approaches in data analysis. Unlike the closely related paradigms such as grounded theory which seek to develop a theory from data, phenomenology seeks a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Hays & Singh 2012:352). Kawulich and Holland (2012:238) note that phenomenological analyses begin with a single unit of analysis such as individual and gradually build the analysis to reflect a group which shares characteristics. The second version of phenomenological analysis is the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) which moves beyond understanding participants' subjective reality to researcher interpretation of participants' reality in context (Kawulich & Holland 2012:239).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is a strategy that examines participants' narratives or accounts of their experience in their unique contexts (Smith 2011:9). Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006:103-104) state that IPA provides insider's perspective of the subject and uses individual cases as the basis for explaining broader social issues. It deals with close scrutiny of an individual case and subsequent search for similar or different patterns across cases (Smith

2011:10). Interpretative phenomenological analysis ‘drives’ two agendas: it first depicts the participant’s world in exactly the way he or she sees it so as to describe the first-hand experience and secondly, the same data is further examined within the social and cultural lenses to understand what it means to be in participants’ shoes (Larkin, Watts & Clifton 2006:104). The researcher is an instrument for this dual purpose of IPA research. Interpretative phenomenological analysis employs the process that some researchers call a ‘double hermeneutic’, “...the researcher trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world” (Smith, 2004:40). Two issues debated on the role of researchers in IPA are: bracketing individual experiences or engaging reflexively with the data. Bracketing posits that the researchers should consciously put aside their assumptions which might be biased but should stimulate curiosity for what is new in the data (Rodham, Fox & Doran 2015:62). Bracketing is counterproductive to an IPA agenda; so a reflexive engagement with data is encouraged. A true IPA study attempts to “...gain an insider perspective of the phenomenon being studied, whilst acknowledging that the researcher is the primary analytical instrument” (Fadde 2004:648). Therefore, IPA researchers acknowledge their interpretative role (Fadde 2004:648) and “...keep a reflexive diary that records details of the nature and origin of any emergent interpretations” (Biggerstaff & Thompson 2008:217).

Using the IPA perspective, the researcher transcribed data verbatim with illustrations of “pauses, mis-hearings, apparent mistakes, and even speech dynamics” (Biggerstaff & Thompson 2008:217), so that analysis could capture the key messages or themes from the data. Key messages were further scrutinized to provide a first-hand account of experiences reported from how participants see it, and to also subject participants’ personal accounts to a sociocultural assessment (Larkin, Watt & Clifton 2006:104).

5.2.4.1 Data analysis process

The key issue in processing qualitative data is coding, a process described as establishing individual patterns in the data (Babbie 2014:409). Baxter and Jack (2008:554-555) note that in qualitative research, data collection and processing are done simultaneously, and in the current study I replayed audio-recorded interviews after they were completed to note how participants had responded to questions and to decide how emerging data could influence my subsequent interviews. Adherence to pre-formulated questions is not the concern of IPA, therefore, I used

interview schedules appended I, II, and III as “the basis for a conversation” (Biggerstaff & Thompson 2008:217). The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and data analyzed qualitatively. I jotted down emerging thoughts and comments concurrently along the margins, and later transformed them into themes that matched participants’ actual words (Chapman & Smith 2002:127). The emergent themes were used to organise data for further analysis. The process was followed through until the transcript of about 10 pages for each participant was completed. IPA applies a number of principles in data analysis which include “moving from the particular to the shared and from the descriptive to the interpretative” (Palmer, Larkin, de Visser & Fadden 2010:103). Palmer et al. (2010:103) see IPA analysis as an iterative and cyclical process which addresses diverse issues such as participants’ “experiential claims, concerns and understandings”, researcher’s reflections on own preconceptions in relation to issues that data actually reveal about the participants as well as identification of common patterns within and across data.

I read the text several times and with every reading I took note of the thoughts, observations and reflections that come with each reading. In line with IPA, I wrote my comments on things that were striking or unusual on the left margins (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn 1999:220). Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008:217) state that the notes include “recurring phrases, the researcher’s questions, their emotions, and descriptions of or comments on, the language used”. Re-reading helped me identify emerging themes expressed by participants’ experiences, and from identified themes I developed a hierarchy of superordinate and subordinate themes (Biggerstaff & Thompson 2008:218). As themes emerged from reading and rereading, I documented them on the right margins of the script (Smith et al. 1999:221). Once preliminary themes were identified I developed a table that showed themes in a summary, while also aligning the themes with transcripts of experiential claims, researchers’ comments, and emerging theme(s). The stages of data analysis are summarised as follows: I looked for themes and usually noted phrases, words or thoughts in the left margins while I wrote thematic titles on the right margins; next I looked for connections. This involved writing titles on a separate page and finding if there were connections between them, and those which were connected were grouped; then I developed a table of themes and established a link between each theme and excerpts that support it so as to avoid personal bias (Smith et al. 1999:220-224). This process was followed with all individual

interview transcripts. Later I compared themes across participants, what Smith (2004:41) calls cross-case analysis, to establish similarities and differences in their experiences.

Working with data involved far much work than what can be summarised in the stages. Studies using IPA have used many steps to come up with a congruent analysis of results. For example, Palmer et al. (2010:104-5) used 8 steps in their study, but a closer look at the steps show how they fit within the four stages. The steps in the study are: 1. Finding participants' objects of concern and experiential claims; 2. Identifying the roles played by the researcher and participants in generating data; 3. Finding further roles and relationships, that is, taking note of any role players, besides participants and researchers, mentioned in the texts and their significance; 4. Analysis should also identify any social systems and organisations mentioned by participants as well as the roles they play; 5. It includes examinations of stories participants tell and their purpose, and the extent to which the stories unite or divide group voice; 6. Examining how language is used and if it has any effect on the message participants intend to pass; Finally, steps 7 and 8 focus on organizing and comparing themes in the entire analysis so as to arrange related themes accordingly until a coherent picture is achieved. The eight steps were carefully followed and helped the researcher assess different layers of meaning in the participants' utterances.

In presenting data, they were grouped into themes that explored related ideas such as physical access, so that participants experiences were explored on the extent to which they supported or conflicted with each other. As a quality assurance mechanism, data presentation is separated from analysis. Participants' perceptions on access and data from documentation are presented using verbatim quotes from primary sources to allow readers to interpret participants' views and feelings by themselves free from my interpretation as the researcher.

5.2.5 Ethical considerations

The idea of ethics in research refers to the way researchers carry out their studies in a morally defensible manner (King 2010:99). King argues that researchers have a mandate to respect venues and participants of their research. The current study followed necessary ethical clearance procedures prior to beginning the study and attention was paid to the following issues while carrying research: informed consent, confidentiality, protection from harm, right to withdraw, beneficence.

5.2.5.1 Ethical clearance

Before data collection, I obtained clearance to conduct the study from the Research and Ethics Committee (REC) of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. A research clearance certificate from UNISA College of Education REC is attached as Appendix IV. An application to conduct the study at the selected institution was submitted at the office of the Registrar on the 7th April 2015, and verbal permission was granted immediately (See appendix V for the letter of application to the institution). Subsequently a written approval was made on the 11th May 2015 (See appendix VI). Participants were contacted only after permission was granted by the Registrar.

5.2.5.2 Informed consent

According to King (2010:99) the requirement for informed consent mandates researchers to provide adequate information to research participants on what the study is about, the risks and/or benefits of participating and the information should be communicated in simple and clear language. Hays and Singh (2012:80) add that a researcher should highlight issues such as limits of confidentiality in the study and unequivocally "...emphasize the voluntariness of participation". Provision of sufficient information about the study enables and empowers participants to take decisions to participate willingly, an idea referred to as autonomy and self-determination by Hays and Singh (2012:79) and King (2010:99), respectively. Participants were informed that the study was pursued for doctoral studies and their experiences would be shared in the form of a research report, thesis, and published in journals and shared seminar presentations. Informed consent extends beyond permission from individuals to participate to consulting relevant gatekeepers and protecting all participants, so that if there are conflicts of interest between informants of unequal status in an institution, requirements for multiple layers of consent are met (Walliman 2011:252).

It is noteworthy to mention that the institution is my workplace and, therefore, it was not difficult to secure permission to conduct the study. However, participation was voluntary and students were assured that decline to participate would not affect their study in any manner. No individual participant was contacted until clearance was sought from the Registrar. I personally conducted all interviews for the study and explained the purpose of the study in clear and understandable terms to every participant, and also gave information sheet in suitable formats for participants to read independently. This included brailled information sheet for Thomas and Norma (See

appendix VIII for a copy of brailled information sheet). During my initial contact with Thomas, he was accompanied by SENA who read the information sheet and consent form for him. He asked the SENA to sign the form for him. On the other hand Norma was interviewed at her office and her friend read the information sheet and consent form, and signed on her behalf. After I had explained to each participant what the study was about, those who were willing to participate were asked to sign a consent form indicating such willingness, (See appendix VII for a sample of a consent form).

5.2.5.3 Confidentiality

The idea of confidentiality closely relates to informed consent in that participants become free to share their world with a researcher if they feel the shared information will not put their lives in danger (Hays & Singh 2012:84). Confidentiality was more critical in dealing with people with disabilities who are usually marginalised and victimised. Most importantly, I explained unequivocally that the study was for my doctorate and it had nothing to do with my work as the university lecturer. I assured them that information they revealed about services or prejudice encountered at the university would not bear their identity or be used against them. King (2010:101) asserts that participant anonymity should be maintained throughout the data collection process. Therefore, in the current study I used pseudonyms instead of names; the information that appears in the study would only be that which answers research questions. The confidentiality principle is tied with rights protected by national laws such as the right to privacy and privileged communication (Hays and Singh 2012:84). In the context of a FGD I explained shared confidentiality principle and asked participants to decide if they would keep confidentiality on issues discussed. They were given a chance to withdraw and if they continued they signed to show commitment.

However, Hays and Singh (2012:84) make a distinction between anonymity and confidentiality; participant anonymity means that the researcher himself or herself would have problem aligning data with a specific participant, a condition which may affect other research practices and principles such as the right to withdraw data as described below and member check which is crucial for improving trustworthiness of a study. The study used the principle of confidentiality by using certain codes such as FED Lecturer instead of staff participants' names so that identity of informants would be concealed, and for student participants pseudonyms were used. Interview

data and information from documents secured for this study have been used for the express purpose outlined to participants.

5.2.5.4 Protection from harm

Harm in research may result from exposing informants to environments and situations that could induce physical pain or cause distress, embarrassment etc. or exposing epileptics to flashlights (King 2010:102). Walliman (2011:253) also cautions researchers to refrain from raising participants' expectations by overstating the impact of the study. He further warns researchers to understand the context they research so that they may not unwittingly offend participants through their behaviour or language. The joint assessment of the study by the researcher and supervisor revealed that it was less likely to be harmful for any informant to partake in this study, and I adhered to other ethical principles such as confidentiality, right to withdraw and so on, to ensure that participants do not suffer any harm by taking part in the study. However, when some students shared their experiences, the sessions seemed to reignite emotions attached to their experiences. In such instances I had to have debriefing sessions with the participants to explain the feelings and to suggest if they needed professional counseling to which they declined.

5.2.5.5 Right to withdraw

Participants should be told of their right to withdraw from a study at any time and of their right to request withdrawal of their data after they have taken part in the study (King 2010:101). This right was explained in unequivocal terms at the beginning of the interview and before a participant signed their consent form which also spelt this right. For two blind students I read and explained the consent form before asking the participants' trusted friends to sign it on their behalf. This right was important to be understood because it differentiated the permission I got from the university management to conduct the study and their rights as students to choose to participate in the study. It also reduced the threat that could come with my position as a lecturer in the same university, hence the emphasis their contribution, if they decided to participate, would be treated with great confidentiality.

5.2.5.6 Beneficence

Beneficence is defined by Hays and Singh (2012:84) as "doing good" for research participants so that they and/or their community gain from the findings of the study. Participants were not offered payment for their participation as this would conflict with ethical issues such as willingness to participate and would taint credibility of the research findings. Rather, I explained

to each participant how the outcome of the study could pave way for better access to education for students with disabilities. The current study has revealed certain gaps in how the university facilitates access to its programmes and a presentation of the study findings has been made to the university community with a list of practicable suggestions for improvement. If the recommendations are adopted, students with disabilities at the institution will experience better access to education.

5.2.6 Trustworthiness (Enhancing quality of the findings)

The term trustworthiness in qualitative research means the extent to which results of a study reflect an accountable means of acquiring and developing data (Shaw 2010:182). In quantitative research, instruments are examined for the extent to which they yield results which are valid and reliable. Conversely qualitative researchers speak of credibility and trustworthiness of research results (Nieuwenhuis 2007:80). Nieuwenhuis (2007:80) states that the following four terms, *credibility, applicability, dependability and conformability* are qualitative synonyms for the quantitative terms *internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality*.

5.2.6.1 Credibility

Baxter and Jack (2008:556) indicate that triangulation of data sources is one way of improving the quality of qualitative research results. Triangulation, otherwise termed crystallisation in Nieuwenhuis (2007:81), employs the use of different researchers and/or multiple sources of data such as interviews and document analysis which give various dimensions to a problem. Crystallisation enables us to understand different shades and perspectives of reality as reality is not fixed and allows deeper understanding of an issue (Richardson 2000 in Nieuwenhuis 2007:81). The researcher collected data from several sources, pictures, interviews, and documentation (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012:137-138) as one way of ensuring credibility and quality in interview data was assured by using a technique called member check (Baxter & Jack 2008:556) for members to check and to certify information before analysis. It was critical to ensure credibility of results because being a member of staff I could easily be biased and mix my knowledge of the institution with participants' experiences. Therefore, I collected data, transcribed it and sent it back to participants for member check, and to verify if they confirm the transcribed data as reflecting their experiences, thus, ensuring that there was no prejudice in transcribing data (Creswell 2014:201).

5.2.6.2 Applicability

The concept of applicability is also known as transferability, and is comparable to what quantitative researchers refer to as external validity (Hays & Singh 2012:200). Generally, the concept refers to the extent to which other research can use the study results to inform their own and check if their context can fit the context of their results. I provided some details such as students' level of study, type of disability, duties of various service providers to students, sites in which focus groups and interviews were conducted etc. (Hays & Singh 2012:200) to allow replication of the study. I have also described where reviewed documents were acquired, their dates, whether they were personal or official documents.

5.2.6.3 Dependability

Dependability can be attained "through rich and detailed descriptions that show how certain actions and opinions are rooted in and develop out of contextual interaction" (Van de Riet & Durrheim 2006:93-94). Dependability is achieved by letting data and their context speak for themselves and therefore actual quotes of participants will be used verbatim to express their untainted perception of issues. The documents analysed for this study will also be described in detail to show if they are primary or secondary sources, and words taken from such documents will be quoted appropriately.

5.2.6.4 Confirmability

Hays and Singh (2012:201) describe confirmability as the extent to which results of a study reflect subjective views of the research participants. In quantitative research confirmability is similar to objectivity or neutrality. In the current qualitative study the criteria were addressed by heeding what participants reflect as their understanding of issues (Hays & Singh 2012:201). Therefore, I have made a clear distinction of actual statements and views of participants and his reflections or likely conclusions.

5.3 SUMMARY

I adopted research methods which gave participants an opportunity to express their views on studying at one tertiary institution in Lesotho. Given its constructivist/interpretivist orientation a qualitative approach was most suitable for the study as it gave attention to participants' narratives of their experiences. Focus was on explaining participants' lived experiences. The study focused on one institution as a case study so that an in-depth description of participants' perceptions of access to education could be made. Due ethical considerations were followed

before engaging participants to share information on their individual and shared meaning of what it meant to be a student with disabilities studying at the institution. Data collected through individual semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion, document analysis and photo analysis were analysed using IPA which also gives attention to participants' unique realities.

CHAPTER SIX: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter six presents the findings of the study, the purpose of which was explained on page 8. Data were presented according to themes generated from individual and focus group interviews with students and staff. Documents and pictures of the physical environment were also analyzed to provide deeper understanding of the phenomena studied. The findings describe practices and policies in place to facilitate access to higher education, challenges experienced by the students and suggest ways in which institutional practices and policies may be improved. For the purposes of providing detailed explanation, participants' words were quoted verbatim. These will permit the readers to make their own interpretation of data generated.

There were two themes generated from data and presented in this chapter. The themes are (a) dimensions of access; (b) critical areas for attention. These themes were derived from data generated from 26 individual interviews (15 with staff and 11 with students) and one focus group discussion with five students. Participants responded to the following three questions:

- a) What practices and policies are put in place to facilitate access to education for students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Lesotho?
- b) What challenges are experienced by students with disabilities studying at higher education institutions in Lesotho?
- c) How can existing practices and policies be strengthened to improve access to HEIs by students with disabilities?

6.1 ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY

This section presents data on efforts put in place by the participating university to ensure access to HE and challenges students with disabilities experience in accessing the education. Data draw attention to eight dimensions of access: (a) admission criteria to the institution and programmes; (b) the handling of disability data; (c) physical/environmental access; (d) support services; (e) access to curricula; (f) university policy on disability; (g) management of inclusive education and (h) access at lower levels of education.

6.1.1 Admission criteria to the institution and programmes

This subsection describes how admission into the university is regulated; that is, it presents an outline of minimum entry requirements into the university and describes participants' views on the way practices of admitting students into the university either enable or obstruct access to the university for students with disabilities. Admission criteria refer to the university regulations set to admit students at the institution and programmes offered. A total number of seven participants highlighted that admission criteria and processes affect students with disabilities' access to the institution. The study recorded negative and positive responses in this regard. In some instances contradictory responses were noted.

6.1.1.1 University regulations on admission

The university admission policy has no special clause for increasing the admission chances for students with disabilities. Admission regulation AR2.05 of the university reads:

The normal requirements for entrance course shall be a Cambridge Overseas School Certificate in the 1st or 2nd Division, with a credit in English Language (and a credit in Mathematics, and also a credit in an approved Science subjects, which include Physical Science, Chemistry, Biology, Integrated Science, if a student wished to register for a B.Sc. degree). A credit in Mathematics will also be required for certain courses in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Qualifying subjects should not include more than one of the following:

- *Art Commercial*
- *Cookery*
- *General Housecraft*
- *Geometrical and Mechanical drawing*
- *Geometrical and Building drawing*
- *Health Science*
- *Metal work*
- *Music*
- *Needlework and Dressmaking*
- *Surveying*
- *Woodwork (The institutional calendar 2006/2007:15)*

AR2.06 and AR2.07 are additional regulations, which stipulate alternative entrance qualifications to the university degree programmes. For example, AR2.06 outlines Recognised Alternative Qualifications as:

1. A general Certificate of Education, provided that the candidate:
 - a. Has taken examinations at Ordinary Level and passed in at least six subjects in not more than two sittings.
 - b. Has passed with credit on Ordinary Level in at least four subjects including English Language. If the student wishes to register for B.Sc. Ed. Degree he/she should have a credit in Mathematics and also a credit in an approved Science subject including Physics, Biology, Chemistry, or Integrated Science.
 - c. Has a grade aggregate for the six subjects not exceeding 34.
2. (i) A Matriculation Certificate or a Matriculation Exemption of the Joint Matriculation Board of the Republic of South Africa, provided that the candidate has a credit in English language.
 - (ii) For the Higher grade Level, Symbol A to E should be regarded as credits, while symbols EE and F should be considered a pass.
 - (iii) For Standard grade, Symbols A to D should be regarded as credits while symbols E should be considered a pass.

AR2.07 describes entrance through International Baccalaureate (IB) Grading as follows:

- i. English language must be passed with at least grade 4 at subsidiary level of IB and grade 3 at higher level.
- ii. For the Faculty of Sciences a minimum of grade 4 at Higher level of IB or D at A level in two approved Science subjects.
- iii. Mathematics must be passed with a minimum of grade 3 at a subsidiary level of IB for those wishing to study Science of Economics, or grade 4 at Maths studies level for all other subjects.
- iv. For other faculties a minimum of grade 4 at subsidiary level of IB or equivalent for all subjects.

- v. The higher level of IB may be considered equivalent to A level, while the subsidiary level of IB or equivalent for all subjects.

General academic regulations AR2.08 to AR2.17 explain conditions applicable to a Mature Age Entry Scheme (MAES). The MAES regulations are meant to facilitate access for people whom the university deems to have potential to enroll and succeed in academic programmes but do not meet minimum requirements of AR2.05, AR2.06 and AR2.07. One of the MAES, AR2.12, reads:

Subject to the number of direct entry applicants, the quota for mature age entry scheme (MAES) for any given year shall not exceed 10% of the total first year intake (The institutional calendar 2006/2007:16).

Additionally, in the introduction section the university's 2006/2007 calendar declares the following about admission:

There are no racial, religious, gender or handicap barriers to admission. The university reserves 20% quota for non-local candidates in its normal intake (The institutional calendar 2006/2007:11).

In an attempt to provide a deeper understanding of the admission criteria and processes, I solicited participants' views. One participant clarified the reason students with disabilities could not have a quota for admission as special consideration similar to other minority groups wishing to study at the university. The admission officer asserts:

Don't forget that they (referring to students with disabilities) are not minority as such. International students bring more money and we as the university we were looking at the financial part of it. If an individual with any kind of disability is not admitted, it is not because s/he has a disability, it is because they would be beat by competition.

One can conclude that the university does not give any special admission criteria to people with disabilities. They are not considered as a minority whose need for access to HE has to be secured. Admission into the university programmes follows clearly stipulated admission criteria and 10% admission space is reserved for MAES and 20% of the space is reserved for non-local students for an economic purpose than perception of certain student population as minority.

6.1.1.2 Views on admission processes

Various perceptions about admission to the university programmes were expressed. A total of three staff members indicated that admission to programmes was non-discriminatory; suggesting that students with disabilities are admitted in the programmes of their choices. Special Education Needs Assistant expresses:

As far as programmes go I would say that students despite of their disability, they can apply for any course.

A Sociology Lecturer suggests:

The University is open for all students, abled and disabled and in a way as long as you qualify to be in this University, then you can come and do whatever programme that you like.

In the same vein, an admission officer indicates:

Until now we have not learnt of an individual whose admission was denied solely on the basis of having a disability, meaning the programmes are accessible.

It is interesting to note that the same three participants, who claimed that the university is not discriminatory in terms of admission of students with disabilities, made contrasting expressions below. For example, SENA noted the following limitations:

The programmes they register for are usually in the humanities. They do not delve into the sciences and other programmes.

The Sociology Lecturer also contradicted herself by saying:

In reality you find that there are some programmes students with disabilities can't do. For example, students with visual disabilities can't do economics because they would then require them to be in front of computers manipulating data and all that.

The admission officer reflects:

If I can go back a little, I remember one Faculty about to reject or in fact it rejected them, it was stated that students with visual impairment were not admissible in the

Faculty of Law while it had previously admitted such learners who studied until they finished their Law degrees. I think Social sciences previously rejected them indicating that they have not yet secured equipment for their needs. Such an incident took place.

From the staff members' views, it can be suggested that admission to the university for students with disabilities, does not guarantee them admission in programmes of their choice. This finding resonates with students' views. For example, Karabo, a student with cerebral palsy resulting in moderate impairment of mobility, speech and fine-motor skills, claims:

...admission criteria is limited because they say they will admit a person who falls within their scope of education provision but the question is, which university should I go to if my needs are not catered for in this university?

Thomas, a blind student in his third year of a degree programme, proclaims:

Here we are limited to do social sciences only.

He continues:

I think the first experience is that one of making choices in courses. We too would like to study in some different courses that are around this university.

Further exploration of the admission criteria and processes reveal that some students with disabilities were advised to change programmes because they were perceived as incapable to cope with the demands of the programmes of their choices. This was evidenced in a paragraph extracted from one memorandum (dated 8th July 2009) written by the Dean of Student Affairs to the interim Head of Special Education. The memorandum reads:

I confirm that ever since her enrolment at the University, Mary [pseudonym] has experienced hearing problems leading to a situation where she does not do well in her academic pursuits. When she joined the university in the academic year 2004/2005 she was doing Law and she was advised to change programs when she could not make it because we thought she failed on the grounds of hearing difficulty as she would not freely join others in legal arguments and discussions.

Students with disabilities confirmed the contents of the memorandum. For example, Thetso, a first year deaf student enrolled in a diploma programme, claims that she was not allowed to pursue the programme she had initially applied for in 2008/2009 because she came without an interpreter for her application process. She says, she was told:

You won't be able to cope with being here at school because you would have to sit in front and lip-read the lecturers.

Similarly, Karabo notes:

When I first came to MIES [institute of the university running part-time programmes] here Adult Education was not my choice course of study. The then head of department explained to me what adult education is and maybe they saw that I would not be able to do Mass Communication as I had applied to do Mass Comm.

Karabo clarifies:

I was told there were no resources for admitting me to do my first year at Diploma level. I was not admitted and then I went the Special Education Unit of the Ministry of Education and Training, it is the Unit, which pointed that if a student with disability qualifies, s/he should be given first priority.

Admission policies are silent about students with disabilities, however, the practices reveal various forms of exclusionary practices which contrast university's claim that its admission policy is not discriminatory. Participants' excerpts indicate that blind students are not admitted in programmes which require Mathematics as a prerequisite. Staff suggests movement of students with disabilities between programmes to what staff view as suitable programmes.

6.1.2 Handling disability data

All 11 students with disability indicated that they disclosed their disability status on the application forms, however, the information was not used effectively to accommodate their needs, hence the lack of support from the university departments such as Department of Student Affairs and the Academic Department which are supposed to facilitate their support. The information about their disability was not considered when: (a) allocating accommodation to students with disabilities; (b) planning academic activities and (c) in choosing teaching

strategies. Blind students, in particular, complaint about lack of proper orientation and timeous knowledge of ICT support services. The reason for withholding students' disability status was clearly articulated by the admissions officer in the following excerpt:

We receive the application forms, our task is to record the application forms in our books for security purposes.... Meaning that later you might find that when a student is now physically present the faculty could examine how it could help the student with their problem. But having admitted them ignorantly I have never seen a student disadvantaged because of their disabilities. That is to say, admission is not based on physical appearance of person but on their qualification.

Though the admissions officer indicates that disability data is captured to be used later by faculties to support students with disabilities, the students' experiences contrast with the claim. There are inconsistencies between what the admission officer says and the students' realities. All eleven students claim that lecturers and members of staff in other departments of the university such as the Department of Students Affairs were oblivious of their presence. Some staff members claim that they have never seen any disability data while processing applications even though students with disabilities have been seen around. A MIES lecturer 1 opines:

I've never had cases where somebody is indicating clearly that as an applicant she or he has some disabilities.

The contents of the memorandum routed on the 23rd July 2015 by the Special Education Needs Assistant to the Dean of one of the faculties indicate that information about the students' disability does not reach the faculties. The MEMO reads:

It came to my attention through rumors that the university has admitted a student with hearing impairment (completely deaf) and this morning I actually met two ladies using sign language in the corridors and stopped to ask a few questions out of interest. It is indeed true that a student by the name of Thetso (fictitious name) has been admitted into a Diploma in Pastoral Counselling programme with her friend so that her friend would help do interpretations in class. I wonder how effective their learning would be and how the special education unit would help the student when there is no additional resource for her kind of support.

The Dean-FED noted on the MEMO:

Your MEMO is received with much appreciation. Our office is in communication with [Senior Assistant Registrar] SAR-Academic and others. Rest assured that we are attending to the issue urgently.

Exactly two weeks later, on the 6th August 2015, the Dean-Faculty of Humanities (FOH), as the host faculty for both students, wrote a MEMO to Dean-FED entitled:

RE: Teaching Assistance for a physically challenge[d] student

The Faculty of Humanities has admitted a student who has a physical disability, precisely that of deafness. In order to carry out her learning activities successfully, she will require a sign language interpreter.

The Faculty is aware that your Faculty is the one in charge of students with special needs. The Faculty is therefore requesting that your Faculty makes provision for the deaf student to be assisted with a sign language interpreter.

Given the situation, the admissions officer provided the following clarification with regard to the handling of disability data:

Once recorded [disability information], we send them to Faculties to be processed there, and this is what I mean by saying they are captured centrally. Once captured, the list itself is taken to individual Faculties but to me I have never seen that list sent out with the disability information.

The admissions officer adds:

Truly speaking I don't know but the information would have been captured in the system. That should be a challenge indeed; I have not seen us doing so. Ours is just admission, but sometimes in the past while student enrolment was still small, I would compile application information of such students into a list which I submitted to DSA as they deal with student welfare. Now that there's a drastic growth in numbers, I no longer do that. That was done for purposes of allocating appropriate accommodation for such people.

There seems to be no forethought about information that students provide. According to the FOH Lecturer:

I think it is the question of awareness, not of only that the application would cater for such things (disability) but we don't think beyond what we have written in the application forms.

The Librarian reiterates:

Academic office is the one that is admitting students, and we only see them when we meet on the way. But if they could make us aware that this year we have this number, then we could maybe arrange ourselves much better.

From participants' excerpts, the information about students' disability status is not seen by or known to lecturers who process admission of first year students; they deal with data on student names and certificates with which they have used to apply without knowledge of the candidates' disability status. These contrast evidence from the admission officer's suggestion that the data are used and agree with her claim in the latter excerpt that she used to disseminate the information but no longer does. The SENA's accidental knowledge about admission a deaf student and effort to secure a sign language interpreter, weeks after resumption of classes, is one example of poor handling of disability data.

6.1.3 Physical/environmental access

There are mixed views about accessibility of the physical environment at the university. In particular, the views were on the accessibility to classes in storeyed buildings, swapping classes between several lecture halls, access to halls of residence, health facilities or pavements around the university campus. The university has built ramps for students to access classes and the library but some buildings remain inaccessible for mobility-challenged students. The views of eight members of staff and six students are described below and pictures are also used to demonstrate their assertions.

6.1.3.1 Efforts to create physical access

Five staff members acknowledge changes made to create access for students with physical and visual challenges. These include ramps, which were acknowledged as facilitating access to

building such as classes, dormitories and the library. A counsellor from the Department of Student Affairs states:

Accommodation, an attempt has been made that students with physical impairments or visual disabilities be catered for in special manner. There are rooms, which are specially designed for their easy access and use. So regarding accommodation the university service is available for them.

A Social Welfare Officer for the same department reiterates:

We have special accommodation for the visually impaired; we have accommodation here at GE [student residence]. Well, the GE is not far from the classes and other facilities but we still need to do a lot I think.

A FED Lecturer 1 says:

...I'm not teaching one of them...but I always see some preparations that are being made when you get to the classrooms, you see even the toilets, the toilets are accessible to these people.

A Social Welfare Officer observes:

There are some ramps which we did not have in the past

The Librarian argues:

The infrastructure that has been in place allows the students with wheel chairs to go around even to the top floor because we have the ramps over there they can use instead of eh, moving up the stairs. There are ramps, any place is reachable in the library.

A Sociology Lecturer also states:

They have wheelchair ramps that allow students to bring themselves in and also for those who can't take the stairs then of course they can use the wheelchair ramps. If you look at PMC for example, it has that smooth climb. It doesn't have stairs but it's just smooth climb. At least students who are disabled can be able to bring themselves up

and down. I think even in the class they have tried to create that wheelchair ramp where the students can come in and go out.

Evidence of the changes is also captured in the two pictures below, which demonstrate access through the use of ramps. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below show the University ramps built for access into some buildings, thus, confirming the views of members of staff above.

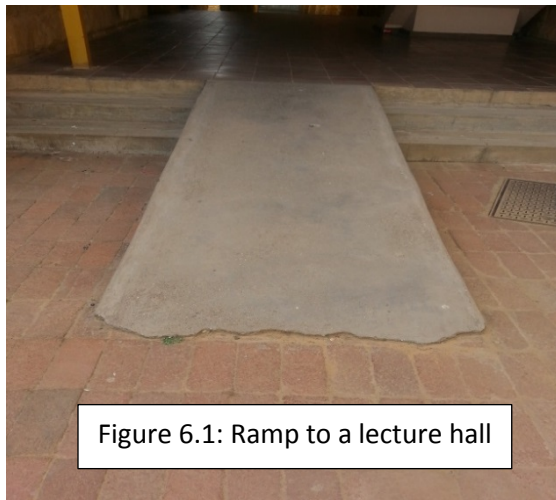


Figure 6.1: Ramp to a lecture hall



Figure 6.2: Ramp connecting library

Figure 6.1 shows a ramp creating access to MBT lecture hall, while Figure 6.2 is a picture of a ramp that connects two levels of the university library.

However, there are no signs to indicate where ramps are, and they may not be visible unless the user already knows about them or asks. Two members of staff feel that the ramps are not user-friendly. For example, an MIES Lecturer¹ notes:

There are some access structures on the ground that if not well-informed any student could just be blocked away. They would not know that if you go around, then there would be some way of getting to any place that is being required.

A student Counsellor also comments:

Some ramps are a way too distant from the offices that students would want to get to which I find inconsiderate because we are saying these are people who are physically challenged, therefore we expect them to go longer distances than we do for them to get

to the buildings yet we say they are physically challenged; I find that a bit inconsiderate and ironic at the same time.

Staff from the Department of Student Affairs says the halls of residence in which students with disabilities reside are appropriate. Members of staff acknowledge changes which the university made by building ramps to create access to lecture halls and the library as figures 6.1 and 6.2 confirm these perceptions. However, there are no signs to guide students to the ramps and the ramps are mostly far away from ordinary access points, and are likely to stress students with impairments.

6.1.3.2 Challenges to physical access

Although progress is noted above, there are still notable challenges to physical access. Some buildings at the institution, that offer essential services to students, are not accessible by wheelchair. The inaccessible buildings undermine the institution's declaration that it "...is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities" (The Institution's Information Booklet 2015:2). Some members of staff state that the university needs to do more to make all buildings accessible and that is a view also shared by students with physical impairments. Additionally, pictures taken around the institution support participants' view that more needs to be done to make all buildings accessible. Participants' experiences are presented below.

A Student Counsellor observes:

Eh, most of the administrative buildings are upstairs and there's no easy way to access such. It's quite a challenge.

Images of buildings in figures 6.3 and 6.4 below corroborate the claim by the Student Counsellor that some administrative buildings are inaccessible.

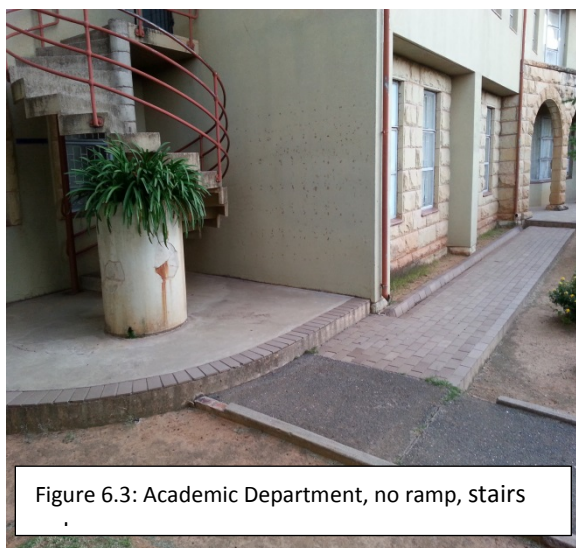


Figure 6.3: Academic Department, no ramp, stairs



Figure 6.4: Bursary Department, no ramp

The Academic and Bursary Departments are housed in the same building. The spiral stairs in figure 6.3 lead to the academic department where all students receive and submit registration forms at the beginning of each year, when such are not given by individual faculties. Students also collect their transcripts from the academic department when they have completed their studies. On the other hand Figure 6.4 shows entrance to the bursary department building where students do financial clearance before registering.

There are several buildings which are inaccessible for mobility-challenged students. Figures 6.5 and 6.6 below show pictures of environment that is inaccessible for mobility-challenged students resulting in their exclusion.



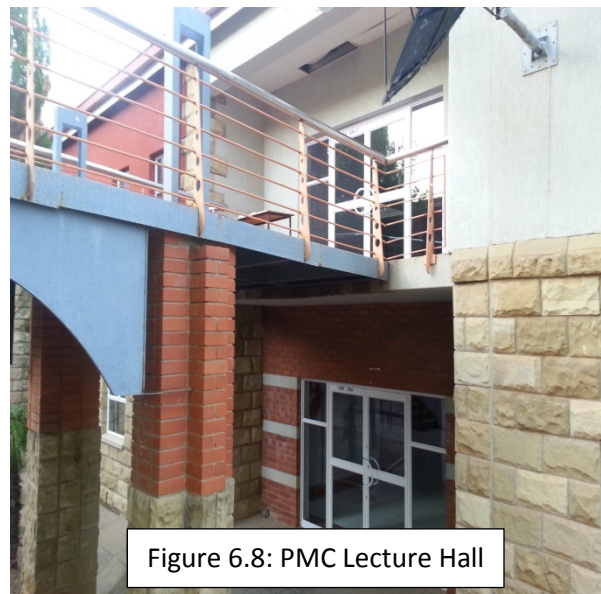
Figure 6.5: PAO Building



Figure 6.6: FTE, male toilets

Figure 6.5 shows entrance to the office of SENA which has no ramp. A SENU is not accessible for students with mobility challenges. Secondly, the first floor of the PAO building has offices for most of the Faculty of Education staff; the Dean, four faculty support staff and 8 Faculty of Education Lecturers. The Faculty of Education is a host faculty for the Special Education Needs Unit, but most office space for its staff is only accessible by stairs as shown in figures 6.5 and 6.6. Additionally, the picture in Figure 6.6 shows an entrance to male toilets in FTE lecture hall which does not have a ramp; one of the two toilets in FTE hall used by females has a ramp.

Experiences of students with physical disabilities validate claims made by some members of staff that some buildings providing critical services to students are inaccessible. Two students with physical disabilities indicate that about a third of their classes is placed on the first floor of MBT (see Figure 6.7 below). Despite MBT being connected by two overhead bridges with PMC, in Figure 6.8 below, which has a ramp connecting the ground and first floor, the bridges are never open.



Students with physical disabilities experience barriers in accessing physical resources of the institution and try to adapt to what every person does though excluded. This was evident in my conversation with one of the students with physical challenges, Raphael. He recounted how he tries to cope with having to climb the stairs. In one occasion classmates reported his challenge on his behalf below. He narrates:

Raphael: They went to the DSA and inquired on the reason the door leading to the FTD ramp was closed, then that's when {pause}. I don't know how DSA responded but all I know is that Tim [Mr. Tim is a pseudonym] came to me and asked if I had a problem accessing other classes and I told him yes ah, ok maybe {light giggle} I can still access classes going upstairs. So I wouldn't even complain about it, so I wouldn't even complain if they closed that ramp because there's MBT, there's no ramp, and there're still classes on first floor. So I would find it, ok, I'm complaining yet at some stages I can still [climb] up the stairs, so this is what made me feel I'd be contradicting myself if I bore some challenges [but] complained about others. I told myself that, ok let me act as normal as I could and climb the stairs and just shut up about that ramp to the building.

Researcher: What do you mean, act as normal as I could?

Raphael: Because these people, I think they don't even, I don't know if they are aware I'm there, they just don't care. I mean, for example, some of my classes like I said 30% of my classes, which I'm forced like in the 1st floor at MBT. That's the reason I'm saying, maybe I should act normal because they expect me to. ... I'd, ok I love the PMC as it accommodates us but it's facilities are closed.

Researcher: How so?

Raphael: Like ok, there is a ramp I can use from PMC to access ok, like it links with MBT well. When I go to the first floor of MBT I could avoid the stairs and go via PMC. I would access MBT easily. Unlike now, MBT and PMC are linked but that bridge is closed and I would recommend it should [open].

After responding to a question on how accessible the university programmes were I probed the social welfare officer further on why ramps creating access for mobility-challenged students were closed despite students' need to use them. He responded to a recent closure of one door mentioned by Raphael above and did not delve on two overhead bridges despite probing. He explained:

For physically disabled we usually meet with personnel in the office that allocates the space, especially with students who need access to certain classes.... Students came and reported that the ramp entrance to one building was closed, we had to consult with the officer concerned to know what is happening, that was all. He said it was for security and he was not aware that there was a physically impaired student who couldn't climb because he had seen a student going up and down there and he was not aware that the student had been going to class there.

Karabo views buildings as accessible only through stairs as clear indication of discrimination. He indicates:

They would be trying to respond to your needs but the fact that there are stairs says the infrastructure is not accessible for wheelchair users or those using crutches.

On the same note, the SW Lecturer 2 remembers that the only health service centre of the university was inaccessible for mobility-challenged persons. She states:

We need eh, to access the clinic, by then there wasn't any; I don't know whether they have now, the ramp to take them to the clinic. They need someone to take them to the clinic. But if it is equal treatment, the services are there, yes they can access the services, but can they access the services without help?

As a student with physical disability, Raphael thinks the physical environment of the university is not easy to use at night and that restricts his movement and chances for study. He narrates:

The reason I mostly get discouraged to use the library is that during the day one attends classes. Then library you have to go late in the night, so I don't travel at night because of darkness. There're lights here and there so I'm afraid I might fall. That is the reason I'm reluctant to go to the library at night.

Figure 6.9 below shows the only access point to the university clinic for students with mobility challenges; the area is not paved and it is steep. The picture supports the observation made by the SW Lecturer 2 about a health centre that is inaccessible. Figure 6.10 reflects two issues; first it shows huge distance between one street lamp to another which is almost invisible in the picture. Poor lighting at night makes moving around campus and going to the library a challenge as

Raphael demonstrates above. Secondly, Figure 6.10 shows that there is no pavement for pedestrians thus supporting claim by blind students that their mobility needs are neglected. The yellow metal in Figure 6.10 protects the street lamp but Thomas is quoted below sharing his frustration of bumping into the metal every time he avoids traffic of vehicles moving about.



Figure 6.9: the institution's



Figure 6.10: Road to student residences

The challenges to physical access for students with disabilities are exacerbated by the university's inability use of disability data to plan access. For example, the SW Lecturer 1 argues that the university lacks planning on how support for students with disabilities should be facilitated. He suggests:

In most cases universities start thinking about issues of access in some cases when they have admitted the students. They do not engage into the processes of whether or not they have accessible facilities before they admit. It is only when the students are, you know, start programmes that they start saying oh, by the way, we don't have facilities.

Two students with physical disabilities were mostly affected by lack of planning for their needs for any particular academic year. They expressed that timetable was set for buildings too far from each other and some classes were scheduled in storeyed buildings. Lerato, a student with disabilities, states:

I sometimes have problems because you find that I have 08:00 o'clock class in the Faculty and 09:00 o'clock class at the MBT, so it means I have to walk long distance,

when I arrive in the class I'd find the lecturer has covered much and I've missed so many things between ten minutes....I don't think they even think about me.

She continues:

English classes are, most of them they're upstairs. I don't know why, and the building doesn't have the lifts.... in winter I don't have to use stairs because I have a problem, the pain on the knees.

Raphael also states:

I think they don't even, I don't know if they are aware I'm there, they just don't care. I mean, for example, some of my classes like I said 30% of my classes, which I'm forced like in the 1st floor at MBT.

The challenges were shared by students with visual impairments who also highlighted the struggle with environment because of lack of mobility support and training.

Thomas notes about his first experience of the university academic life:

I had to navigate FTD, to MBT to PMC...I didn't even receive a special orientation; I just received an orientation just like any other students, and it wasn't to my level, because you are told that this is MBT, this is eh, library, while I am walking with others. And even they didn't know anything about the lab that I'm using, eh.. the lab of the visual impaired students, they didn't know about it.

Norma states the following about mobility at the university.

I had to find a guide which I pay for mobility within campus. The university does not support mobility needs of the visually impaired.

Students with physical and visual impairments are the most affected the institutions' disability unfriendly environment. They experience mobility challenges. There are no pavements, overhead bridges connecting buildings through a ramp are closed and some office buildings only have stairs. Additionally, students with physical impairments have to routinely climb stairs to attend

classes while students with visual impairments lack initial orientation to the university environment and have to depend of others for guidance.

6.1.3.3 Participants' reflections on environmental barriers

Every student with disability has different needs even if they are all physically challenged. Two students with physical disabilities struggle with inappropriate furniture in their lecture halls besides other physical barriers they encounter. For example, Lineo is short and suffers from kyphosis. She says:

The chairs in class some are not, in fact none is comfortable for us people with disabilities. When seated on a chair I can't reach the height of a desk, so I use my lap for supporting my book and writing or I stand on my feet to be able to use a desk.

Lerato shared her experiences about the environment as follows:

For the furniture inside the lab, I have the problem with the tables, we have these long tables and the long chairs, because, I assume it's because they're saying it's a lab, so everything has to be up. So we use them every day when we're in the class, so sometimes I have problem with them, even though I happen to learn how to use them.

The views of a FOH Lecturer concur with those of students with disabilities. He notes that the university does not have targeted services for students with physical disabilities and a fully-staffed disability office. He recounts a case of one student who had to abandon her studies as a result of barriers to access. He states:

...there are no facilities that include people of different types of disabilities. Even the environment itself is not supportive of people with disabilities. I have a particular [case] of a student who enrolled for our programme in past two to three years, she was having physical impairment ... her type of disability was such that it was hard for her to attend some of the classes in the rooms, in the halls that were in the upper rooms. That was one thing, the second thing was, sometimes the rooms were so separated that it would allow only students who are said to be able to move from one hall to the other [timeously]. Physically they had to run from one hall to another. So she was not able to meet this kind of demand and as a result she was disadvantaged....

Students with disabilities are not satisfied with their dormitory and services they receive for maintenance of malfunctioning equipment in the house. Thomas opines:

We are using only one toilet; there are no showers at all in that bathroom. Yes, it's not, there is no maintenance in our rooms.... the hot water is running but water is always flowing, those taps are not tight; there are many problems in there. Sometimes the Geezers doesn't work, people of maintenance will come after a month you have told them that this is not working.

Similarly, Raphael claims:

There is, like a delay when you want something. Let's say a shower is malfunctioning, you report it to the maintenance office, oh they take forever {light giggles}. They take forever, I don't know like now; we just reported the burnt globes in the bathrooms. I took a letter to the, ok maintenance office, they never responded.

The physical environment, similarly, poses barriers for students with visual impairment. Their challenges have to do with ease of movement around the campus where the surface is uneven and there is no paving. Thomas maintains that lack of pavements around the institution routes is a challenge to blind students who are forced to share a road with vehicles. He opines:

There's no pavement, every time cars are behind us, it frightens me. At time there are cars from all directions, I don't know where to go, go aside. There's something that is, is it, I don't know what the metal is, I hit many times. This leg is used to it. Even today I think I'm going to hit it. I am getting used to it. Cars are given privilege over us.

Similarly, Keletso, as a partially sighted student, remembers falling several times in the beginning weeks of her first year. She notes:

I think I fell five times here in campus...I fell when going to buy food because maybe my mind was not on the way, then I fell, had some scratches, then I fell again. ...with time you get used to the place and you know where you can walk carefully.

In sharing his struggles with physical environment at the university, Thomas, a blind student who uses a walking stick, states:

I meet so many potholes on the way...is it LEC and WASA [that] are just leaving out [holes] ...we told people of maintenance that they have to solve that problem, but since last year they didn't. I think the way have to be paved enough... after it rained... I can't walk freely. I meet some water along the way, they are not well-structured... there are places that are not paved at all.

The abbreviations of LEC and WASA mentioned by Thomas above refer to Lesotho Electricity Company and [Lesotho] Water and Sewerage Authority, respectively. Figures 6.11 and 6.12 are pictures taken outside the PAO building ICT room used by students with visual impairments. The holes were not covered months after maintenance was done in the drainage systems around the building, thus, posing danger for students with visual impairments. Figure 6.13 shows a pavement leading to MBT lecture hall and offices, the hole in the middle may not be identified by blind people while still using a walking stick and this may lead to injury.



Figure 6.11: PAO building A



Figure 6.12: PAO building B



Figure 6.13: Paving outside MBT

Certain buildings of the university are not accessible for students with physical disabilities, but students are expected to receive essential services from them. The buildings include, the university clinic, a building that houses bursary and academic departments, toilets in FTE lecture hall, office of the Special Education Needs Assistant and the first floor of the PAO building. The first floor of MBT lecture hall and offices can be reached through overhead bridges connecting MBT and PMC; the latter has ramps connecting first and ground floor. However, doors to the bridges at PMC have never been opened despite enrolment of students with mobility challenges

who attend classes in the first floor at MBT. Inside the classroom, furniture is not suitable for students with physical disabilities. The hall of residence earmarked for students with disabilities has one bathroom and one toilet and both male and female students with disabilities are expected to use the same resources. Students with visual impairments are challenged by inadequate paving along the university routes and multiple holes left uncovered during maintenance of the university facilities.

6.1.4 Support services

This subsection presents findings on the students' access to academic and psychosocial support services and the challenges they encounter in accessing these services. Academic support is described under two subheadings, namely, special education needs unit services and tutorship services. On the other hand, psychosocial support is explained under four subheadings which are access to social support, access to emotional support, the students' experience of discrimination and the students' participation in extramural activities.

6.1.4.1 Academic support services

6.1.4.1.1 Special education needs unit services

The Special Education Needs Unit (SENU) is an academic support unit created in the 1999/2000 academic year when the university first created a position for Special Education Needs Assistant to support students with disabilities. Currently, SENU's support is geared towards visual impairments only through the use of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources installed with JAWS for the learners' learning and assessment activities, and the librarian claims that the library also provides the same services. This finding indicates that students with other disabilities receive no support, and they also know little about services in the Special Education Needs Unit. The current SENA who completed two years of engagement in the SENU in September 2016 says he learnt about his responsibilities from ad hoc consultations. His contract only indicates that he has been appointed into EDF department, but says nothing about his job responsibilities. SENA understands his job as:

We primarily offer braille transcription. That is our main area of activity. We transcribe into braille and we can also transcribe from braille to normal text, so it's just braille in essence.... beside braille transcription eh, they are usually given an extension time when writing examinations, even tests, that's to allow them to finish up

because they rely or they type out their assignments, tests and examinations.... if they are researching on something on the internet, they'd usually ask for my aid and one, in fact a recent case was when one students came and wanted to know how to download PDF format documents.

Asked what specifications were made in the job advert, he indicates:

The post was not advertised due to urgency of the services required, I was head-hunted.

Coincidentally, the disability services offered by the library also entail the use of Information and Communication Technology to support learning for student with visual impairments. The Librarian states:

...basically we're concerned only with the visually impaired, that's why we have a computer, a computer that talks. It has software that indicates or that instructs the student to do the work. It has the scanner; it also has the printing machine, which embosses. It converts the writing into braille.

In responding to how support is facilitated for students with disabilities, the following members only knew of support provided for students with visual impairments.

A SW Lecturer 2 narrates:

There's a special education support unit, I don't know what they call it exactly. And there used to be someone who interpret and transcribe their, what they call braille, something like that. That is the support I only know about, I don't know how it functions because I haven't taught any student with visual impairment.

A Sociology Lecturer declares:

PAPS [Public administration and political science] had blind students before so I'm sure some things were done to accommodate them. Of course there's a lab there where they can go there and I don't know they had some special place where they can go and listen to lectures and whatever, I've never actually got into the lab and they have a lab. The visually impaired have a lab.

It was interesting to note that some students were not aware of any form of support available for students with disabilities. This was evident in the response provided by Lerato, a student with physical disabilities who expressed to know nothing about the disability unit. Similarly, Raphael, a full time student with physical disability said he knew nothing about the Special Education Needs Unit. He responds:

No there was no such. There was no such because ah, I just took it like anyone else. I looked at my situation before and I questioned myself how am I going to survive? Like my family too, they were worried what's going to happen to me. You think there's accommodation, I didn't know but I got encouraged when I saw in the application forms that I had to fill in the situation like disability situation.

The SENA provides three types of academic support for the visually impaired namely, braille transcription, supervision of tests and examinations, and assistance with information search for students' research. The university library has similar ICT resources. Members of staff know the ICT lab as serving only the needs of students with visual impairment. Students with physical disabilities do not know much about SENU because the unit's services are unknown. Additionally, Lecturers do not willingly advocate the support of students with disabilities. For example, lecturers in one department did not find out whether each member supported a student with disabilities pursuing a programme in their department and to establish how each facilitated the support. In some instances students with disabilities are unknown to their lecturers or are identified while a programme has started. The FED Lecturer 1 indicates that he lacks the knowledge of the support given to students with disabilities indicating that the special education needs unit is isolated in the Faculty of Education.

He claims:

... the [Special Education Needs] unit is excluded from the faculty because we don't know anything ourselves. We are not part of the unit, we don't know how it is operating, and we just see people. But in actual fact there's nothing that is made known to us in the faculty about what is happening there.

Similarly, the academic staff generally seems to know little about how to support students with disabilities as one lecturer and a student with disabilities explain.

The BA lecturer explains:

In the past I've seen people with some disabilities and I thought maybe, although they were not in my faculty, [they] really needed some sort of support but that's what I thought, I don't know the actual situation on the ground but I'm not aware of any.

Keletso claims:

[As for] others [lecturers] you'll have to remind them every minute that after this class I have to have this and then sometimes they don't prepare what they have to prepare.

Additionally, access is constrained by lack of disclosure of students' disabilities to the academic staff. A Consumer Science Lecturer opines:

It was not like we were expecting to see somebody with a physical disabled situation.... But other support, I am not sure of other lecturers but myself really I haven't, I wouldn't say I have provided any support and even within my programme, she's now finishing her first year with us but I've never heard us, sitting in a meeting, talk about like you know, what can we do for this student, these are the problems. We do it individually, so there's no coordination, I wouldn't really lie.

Karabo also notes:

My lecturers at degree level are all new and I don't know how they are supposed to know about me, at the same time it is not easy to report your problem to management several times because it appears as though you are seeking special attention or you are too demanding. You end up saying the best I can have is sufficient.

The work of SENU is undermined by how disability data is handled; the admission office does not share the data with SENA, students' needs are identified late and additionally, staff has no mandate to support the students. As much as lecturers do not know about students with disabilities in time, the students are reluctant to report their problems to the institution authorities more than once because they fear victimisation.

Additionally, available services offered by the SENU seemed inefficient. Only one student with visual impairment was happy about the ICT resources and services. Contrary to common challenges with ICT facilities expressed below by full time students with disabilities, a part time student's experiences were positive. For example, a blind student, Norma who was studying for a postgraduate diploma on a part-time basis, comments:

In terms of learning the facilities they are proper and meet my needs. For instance, I could access the internet in that disability office.

However, Norma was also not told about services of a computer laboratory for students with visual impairments until she had to write a test. She narrates:

...but on a Wednesday I was told that I was also writing while I had not oriented myself with the computers I was going to use for taking the test.... I should have practiced with the computers before I could use them for writing a test.

ICT infrastructure in SENU was considered useless. In particular, full-time students who used ICT laboratories in the library and in the SENU highlighted that available ICT services did not meet their needs. They mentioned challenges with limited internet access, software incompatibility and lack of vision enhancement facilities for students with low vision. On the other hand majority of the students with disabilities wished the university could do more to make Internet services accessible. Keletso comments:

When we were in first year we would struggle with Internet. Most of the time our assignments, because we can't access books, we have to use internet to access books. So most of the time there won't be internet in the office.

Keletso and Thomas state that the computers are too old and software is not updated. The operating systems of the computers both in the library and SENU are not compatible with JAWS; in the SENU they use JAWS 13 with windows XP. When asked what challenges they bring Thomas notes:

It can't read some, so many things, it needs to be eh, with OS windows 08 to, so that it can be so easily accessible, for instance when I'm getting into some, to internet I can't be able to read so many things there.... it becomes slow and it takes long, a lot of time

to access things. It's totally not compatible and, and exams and tests, I'm writing with my own laptop. I'm totally not using those ones, yes, and I think they are useless.

The information and communication technology which has outdated software is confirmed by a MEMO from SENA to Head-Computer Services Unit (CSU) dated 23/03/2015 which reads:

It has come to the realization of the office (Special Education Needs) that the computers and related services currently available at the ADC Computer lab have become incredibly slow. Inevitably, students' academic work is frequently held back by the dwindling speeds of this ICT infrastructure.

I therefore, humbly, ask that students...[names omitted] be allowed and assisted to access internet services provided through the ADC Computer Lab using their personal laptop computers as they will outperform the two desktop computers and, in ...[name omitted] case, have assistive software (JAWS) already installed.

Access to ICT resources seems to be a general problem because two students who do not use the unit's services had similar challenges. For example, Katleho also comments on internet accessibility at MIES:

Internet is a problem here; the wireless is only in certain places and is not reliable. You sometimes come and find that there's no internet reception.

Raphael also expresses frustration about Wi-Fi connection he gets from the hall of residence.

...the internet thing, in as much as it makes my life easier, it sometimes, I don't know if it can get better because sometimes the internet is not accessible for a week and for someone who is reliant on it, it negatively affects me.

Clearly the different experiences articulated by full time and part time students can be explained by the fact that part time students use the university resources during school holidays when other students are on recess. Therefore s/he does not have to compete for resources with other students with disabilities. Poor resourcing of ICT laboratory for students with visual impairments brought a series of challenges for access to information

and limited academic participation of the students. The unit needs to be better resourced and its services publicised if efficient support for the students is to be realised.

6.1.4.1.2 Tutorship services

Support initiatives are also provided by tutors. A tutor at the institution is a lecturer selected to give academic and psychosocial support to students. Tutors are lecturers who are assigned additional responsibilities to advise students on what programmes and courses to choose, process marks of students at year level at the end of the academic year and provide counselling when they give them results. Tutors are also supposed to provide counselling to students on social issues that could affect their academic performance. The issue of tutorship was considered by nine staff participants as critical for academic support of all students. A counselor and 8 lecturers, five of whom were tutors expressed strong views on the role tutors could play to support students with disabilities. However, evidence suggests that majority of students are unlikely to receive individual support from tutors because of high workload. Tutors also hardly understand their responsibilities because they lack the necessary induction, and their contracts do not describe these responsibilities.

Evidence from interviews with 5 lecturers who are also tutors indicates that tutorship services, especially psychosocial support, may not be accessible to most students with disabilities due to high student-tutor ratio. Additionally, tutors do not have expertise to provide counselling, particularly to people with disabilities, and let alone identifying such students. The words of a FED Lecturer 2, who is also a tutor and a lecturer of one student who is partially sighted, serve as evidence:

Sometimes you may not even notice. I just happen to notice this one (referring to a student with visual impairment) because this particular student in my class is a very interactive student, otherwise I wouldn't know. And even if there are others besides this one I don't know.

The BA Lecturer shares the sentiments:

Sometimes you come to class, have one hour to deliver, they've already seated, the person is in the middle, you cannot identify disability or anything.

The FED Lecturer 1, who at the time of the interviews had just been reappointed as a tutor, states:

I am not aware of such a person but I got his name on the file. Thomas, that is his name. So the person who probably knows more about him is the substantive tutor who is on leave now.

The situation with the FED Lecturer 1 can be explained by the fact that she was fairly new and still familiarizing herself with students in her class. However, the excerpts of the two participants, FED Lecturer 2 and the BA lecturer, indicates lack of expertise to identify disability. It was also evident that the very same tutors employed to provide psychosocial support were not trained to perform such duties. The BA lecturer notes:

We are not equipped, in fact I'm not equipped enough to do counselling but one would think of maybe academic counselling, but definitely we are less equipped. We need to be equipped further as to how we execute the counselling part of it.

Also a MIES Lecturer 2 avers:

So as of now, as a coordinator I just do it [counselling] eh, just haphazardly because I'm not a counsellor but there are those arrangements and plans to have one [person] to address their psychosocial needs.... Much of my work is towards administrative issues. I am also teaching though I am not teaching first year, which is the level where the student in question is.

The problem of lack of expertise occurs in a context whereby tutors have to service large numbers of students, a problem clearly articulated in the excerpts below. The Sociology Lecturer opines:

The tutor is not for a particular class, but for a faculty. In FSS for example, students in one year level are in excess of two thousands, so I cannot just handle everything. I don't know how to put it but it is basically an overarching thing. It's not individual casing because look I am still a lecturer. I teach, I go to class, I have my own students, and I have my own department I belong to. So it really wouldn't, it would be very impractical

for me to be dealing with all these other issues together with what I'm supposed to be doing every day.

A BA Lecturer could not estimate the number of students of the year level he tutors. He expresses:

I can't have the exact number but it's roughly 16, around sixteen programmes.

High tutor-student ratio, tutors' lack of expertise to identify students with barriers to learning and lack of counseling skills made it difficult for students with disabilities to benefit from the services they needed to access curriculum on the same level as their counterparts.

Further exploration of the issue reveals various perceptions about the role of tutors, a problem which could further undermine the chances of students with disabilities to access tutor support that could help them access curriculum. Lack of clear understanding about the tutor's role occur in the context whereby an unpublished university document, entitled job description for academic and non-academic staff, outlines four key performance areas for tutors: (a) register students; (b) counsel students (careers/personal); (c) attend meetings (committee, board, executive, etc.) and (d) process results. Ordinary staff members understood the role of tutors as providing counselling and assisting with academic work. These were clearly articulated in the following excerpts. The BA Lecturer states:

Responsibilities of a tutor include counselling students, working on the results of students and making sure that they are correct when they are being issued to students. In the issuing of results I make sure that there is also counselling. These are the major responsibilities.

A FED Lecturer 2 explains:

A tutor is somebody who has to give a student academic and social support. I believe that at least they [students] are aware that a tutor is somebody who is meant to help them when they have social challenges, academic challenges but from there I'm not sure whether there's any other support that they can be provided with.

There were some lecturers who emphasized the importance of tutors in the lives of students with disabilities. They argued that tutors should be aware of the students' disabilities and must positively influence the students' experience of learning at tertiary level. A SW Lecturer 2 explains:

I think tutors should actually play a very important role when it comes to such kind of students (referring to students with disabilities) because I want to believe this information of their challenges, eh is also communicated to them by the right body, and I want to think tutors play a role to disseminate this information to the lecturers to talk to the students and also find you know, what can I say, ways of how to assist them in their challenges.

A Consumer Science Lecturer narrates:

I think the tutors main work is to make sure that whoever is physically disabled gets, his life is you know, is made easy so that he can be given the same level for her or him to study with other students. He shouldn't be disabled physically and disabled academically because of her condition or his condition.

The understandings of lecturers who also served as tutors were different from ordinary staff in the sense that they focused primarily on academic support. For example,

A MIES Lecturer 2 notes:

I'm here every weekend they have classes, because we're on part-time, so that I can address their concerns, I can see to it that they are in class, to see to it that they have the materials, to see to it that they have course outlines and I think to also allocate teachers who would be teaching them. This is my responsibility to make sure that I make all the necessary arrangements to see to the good running of the programme in the sense that I have to draw up the timetables for them and see to it that each learner has the schedule for the weekend meetings.

A FED Lecturer 1 opines:

It is the responsibility of the tutor eh, to assist, to make sure now, that the student is comfortable.... To assist the students in whatever they need and also to rescue them, you know, when they have problems with other departments and also to process marks, to assist them, you know, academically.

One of the students with disabilities, Karabo shared his experiences, which appear to have influenced his understanding of the roles of the tutors: Karabo indicates:

I want to repeat the fact that I had caring coordinators at diploma level that could contact me after class and ask me how things were. They also informed my lecturers ahead of time about me and the lecturers also tried, during their facilitation, to check my progress.

On the basis of participants' words, one can conclude that the roles of tutors are seen differently by both ordinary lecturers, students and lecturers who also serve as tutors. This could result from the institution's lack of published information about tutors' responsibilities. The challenge is that some students with disabilities may not benefit from the services of tutors.

Although a tutor's responsibilities are clearly described in the job description document mentioned above, there is nothing in the contract which explains what the additional responsibility of the appointed lecturer would be. Lecturers' explanations of tutors' responsibilities show that they have an idea of the responsibilities but there are also differences in their perceptions. Data also show that a lecturer can start tutorship before receiving a tutorship contract, and the contract does not outline the responsibilities. There is also no known induction service to lecturers and, therefore, lecturers appointed to the position informally acquire knowledge and skills for the job.

Information on the duties of Lecturers as tutors is accessible from the university calendar. Ordinance No. 8 (Promulgated on the 29th October 1979) on Student Records and Counselling and the Faculty Tutors, notes that the institution gives provision for a Faculty/Personal Tutors to support students' academic development. Subsection 3 of Ordinance No. 8 reads:

The Faculty/Personal Tutors shall be elected by the Faculty for period of two years with the duty of assisting with and coordinating the Orientation, Registration, Counselling

and preparation of academic results of students. A Faculty may decide to combine the duties of the Faculty Tutor with those of Deputy Dean in the same person. A Faculty may also decide to appoint more than one Faculty Tutor.

Subsection 4 of Ordinance No. 8 reads:

Unless exempted by the Faculty, in exceptional circumstances, each full-time member of the academic staff shall act as a personal tutor to a number of students assigned to him/her by the Dean, assisted by the Faculty Tutor in assigning students to personal tutors, actual and intended majors of the tutee shall be taken into account. With approval of the Dean or Deputy Dean of the Faculty, a student may change his/her personal tutor.

It may be concluded that the reason the institution does not give description of duties in a tutorship appointment letter is because the information is available in its official document. For example, an appointment letter of one tutor in the Faculty of Education reads:

I am authorized by the Vice-Chancellor to appoint you as ...Tutor, Faculty of Education with retrospective effect from... for a period of two years.

The duties of tutorship stated in the unpublished university document, entitled job description for academic and non-academic staff, are similar to how Ordinance No. 8(3) describes them. However, there are changes evident in how the university practices tutorship currently: lecturers are appointed as year level tutors and not as personal tutors and the number of students, served by one tutor, is the total number of students in a particular year of study in one faculty. A student, for as long as she or he is in a particular year of study, may not change a tutor, thus, making subsection 4 of Ordinance 8 not applicable.

In responding to how clear the responsibilities were, the BA Lecturer noted:

I know them from my experience; unfortunately I haven't read the contract. I haven't had access to my contract yet. I have been a tutor for roughly four months but I haven't received it yet.

The FED Lecturer 2 also shared the following experience about her tutorship:

I think there should be guidelines for what are the tasks of a tutor because we are operating from a vacuum here and everybody is doing as they please. If there were specified guidelines, then it would help a tutor. I may be trying to assist and in the process I may be doing administrative work or even going beyond what I'm expected to do....There is no written document that specifies the what, the work of a tutor. You just assume from your own conscience that probably this is what I should be doing, not from the Faculty, not from the Department and not even from the Academic Office.

Tutorship at most is confusing to even the position bearers. For example, the BA Lecturer shared the following experience about tutorship responsibilities:

I have had an experience whereby one colleague of mine that is a tutor requested for example, permission from the Dean that he be given a right to expel students who come seeking clarification around, seeking clarification why they failed a course.

A FED Lecturer 2 noted:

You take it from people who were tutors before you that this is what you're expected to do. But it is not written in black and white.

Given that the MIES Lecturer 2 left out psychosocial support in her description of tutorship responsibilities, she was asked whether her work was also directed to students' psychosocial support.

She responded:

That is the one thing that I'm not doing. In our last [departmental] meeting we talked about that because we think sometimes they need counselling and guidance.

Responding to the same issue of clarity of a tutors' responsibilities a FED Lecturer 1 stated:

They are not clear, because we are not eh, oriented, we're just given that piece of job without any orientation. So in the midst of time you're going to learn, yourself, what to do.

Tutors are given contracts but the contracts do not give description of tutorship responsibilities. Appointed members of staff may begin their tutorship before they get a contract formally appointing them. Tutorship skills are acquired by doing the job and learning from others; at times tutors use their own conscience. There are tutors who fail to recognize certain tutorship responsibilities as theirs and, therefore, do not perform them.

6.1.4.2 Psychosocial support services

6.1.4.2.1 Access to social support

A claim was made that DSA interacted with another department to support students with visual impairments but it could not be verified. There was no interaction between DSA and SENU at that juncture. It was said that DSA transported students with physical disabilities to town on the basis of need but none of the five participants with disabilities were aware of the service. The findings of the study revealed that some of the students' social needs such as accommodation were not properly met partly because of poor handling of disability data.

In response to a question on how DSA facilitated support for students with disabilities, a Welfare Officer states:

Actually for academic learning we usually interact with the department especially if we are dealing with the visually impaired.

When asked how the DSA works with SENU the Welfare Officer clarified that they do not work with the SENU in the Faculty of Education. He says:

No, there is not much communication between us and them.

A follow-up question on what department is referred to above did not yield clarity. However, Welfare Officer indicated that there was some form of social support the department gave students with physical disabilities. He states:

Sometimes we just take them out to town. There is not much that we do when it comes to sports.

Interestingly, no student with physical disabilities was aware of the facilitation the DSA made to transport students with disabilities to town when they needed. Incidentally the DSA was not able

to execute its welfare duties for the students adequately. Two students with physical challenges indicated that they were allocated rooms in the dormitories which were not user-friendly to their disability. On both occasions the Department of Student Affairs made efforts to meet their needs after two weeks. For example, Raphael, a physically challenged student who lost functioning on both lower limbs as a result of TB spine towards the end of high school and uses crutches, recalls:

I think the University wasn't ready really, because I remember when I got here, I would talk about residences – houses that we stay eh, ok I applied for like staying inside campus. They didn't account, like there was nothing, accommodation for me because I was told to go check some residence; it's called Chancellor, Chancellor building. Then I settled there for about, it was around two weeks I think, but I found it difficult there because eh, {light giggles}. Ok there was no water inside, I had to travel and there was no way I could carry a bucket. I don't think the university was ready though I had mentioned that I have a problem of walking.

Keletso also adds:

I remember when I was in 1st year, I had to get a single room. So I indicated ... you fill the forms and indicate your problem, but I don't know whether they don't look at them or what because they'd still be giving you a room with another person. I had to go up and down trying to explain myself and all that of which I already explained in paper. I think after two weeks or so, they wrote a note ... They wrote that a lady with visual impairment should come at the DSA.

The two excerpts confirm that disability data are not used efficiently because the students were exposed to social challenges which could have been avoided if their needs were considered. The frustration the students encountered as a result of challenges with accommodation could easily affect their academic work.

6.1.4.2.2 Access to emotional support

The counselling unit had no focused support for students with disabilities; students were served on the basis on need. The counselling unit advocated for students whom psychosocial needs have affected their academic progress. A blind 2nd year Law student committed suicide in the period

when he was not seeing any counsellor but was communicating with wardens. The Counsellor said she was not aware how many students with disabilities were enrolled at the university. There was unanimous feel that the department was understaffed leading to poor service delivery. Counsellors were overworked as they had no support staff and could not effectively facilitate individual sessions with large student population. It was argued that management ought to consider providing requisite resources if students' well-being was to be safeguarded. However, DSA was working on an improvement plan that would see its services enhanced and delegating an office to issues of disability.

The Counsellor though working in the Department of Student Affairs could not support claims made by a colleague, the Social Welfare Officer. She explains:

From the counselling unit there is no particular outstanding support that I would say we give.... So at the moment we only assist students indiscriminately as they come, there`s no particular support that is offered to them directly that is addressing the needs of such students from our unit, that is going to occur from the departmental level. The only thing that has been the practice in the past has been that we advocate for students who have psychological distress that are affecting their academic programme.

In reflecting on support services offered by the DSA both the Student Counsellor and Social Welfare Officer were asked to comment on the services of the department in relation to the death of a blind student. The student was in his 2nd year of Law degree and he committed suicide in his room at the university student residences in March 2015. Their comments were as follows.

The Social Welfare Officer reveals:

Yeah we do have some wardens who look after them and the boy was talking with them; that is another type of counselling. That is why we tell them to open up, to tell their problems and they have been doing that actually. We were surprised that we encountered that terrible problem.

The Student Counsellor states:

I would say really our students who are disabled are not supported. They are not supported at all. It would be difficult for me to say whether he would have committed

suicide had he been supported in a manner that he needed. However, it would have cleared my conscience to know that this unit has done all its best towards assisting him to such an extent that I can claim that there could have been of no help... It's sad to admit that but, we have not focused on them directly and I'm even ashamed to tell you that I'm not aware of how many disabled students we have registered here.

Further exploration of the problem, reveals that understaffing was a problem. The Welfare Officer reveals:

We are understaffed; we have two student welfare officers, and about six part-time wardens for the whole university. I don't think we are doing justice for the students. Oh, we also have two counsellors and they are also understaffed.

The Counsellor narrates:

There are two professional counsellors in the unit but there is no support staff which means that the counsellors do take appointments themselves and do some administrative work which is quite a challenge because these issues that we are talking about; the marketing, the taking of appointment, the sorting out of student appoint and the rest need some support staff and we are working towards the ratio of one counselor to about three thousand students which is a nightmare.... our staff complement is a big challenge on our part even if we were to extent our services and increase the number of students who access our services, we wouldn't be in a position to provide for them especially the one-to-one counselling sessions that we would want to.

In response to how the university addressed issues of student support, the Social Work Lecturer 1 described under resourcing as one key challenges facing DSA. He said students' social and emotional well-being was not focus of the university management. He expounds:

We are certainly not adequately resourced in terms of responding to the needs of students with disabilities. The office of the Dean of Students Affairs eh, I think it also needs all the support it can get from administration. As things are as of now, it's like not much is happening in terms of resourcing, you know, that office, to the extent that without resources they are also frustrated, such that very often in terms of targeted

services, that becomes very difficult. I think this is an issue, student disabilities is an issue that should receive attention from administration as well so that they're able to eh, deploy resources, you know, where they're needed.

Both the Welfare Officer and the Student Counsellor mentioned a plan underway for positive developments, in the department. The department was said to have plans to enhance its services for effective students support. The Counsellor indicates:

...but from the departmental level, the Student Affairs Department, there's yet to be a structural change that is going to happen in the near future.

The Welfare Officer too states:

So we are hoping to have a special office which will work directly with these students.... We are now working on the operational pan of the Department; so we are trying to include both [social and academic] issues.

It can be concluded that the university does not have adequate personnel to provide emotional support for vulnerable students. Two counsellors and two social welfare officers may not sufficiently address individual, one-to-one social and emotional needs of a student population of about 10 thousand. Students' psychosocial health has a bearing on how they deal with academic challenges.

6.1.4.2.3 The students' experience of discrimination

Two students with physical disabilities indicated that they were victims of discrimination and bullying; they felt judged as strange and devalued. Funny comments were passed in their presence and one was laughed at, gossip passed about her in clear view of their behaviour. Another was called names and her participation in sports questioned and devalued. The issue of discrimination was reprimanded by DSA office through a public notice sent to all students on the 19 March 2015 (REF: DSA/U/5-1): The circular reads:

It has come to our attention that there are students who portray unacceptable behaviors and attitudes of discrimination, prejudice and racism against other students, particularly international students and students with disabilities.

The discrimination was confirmed by Lerato, a student with physical impairment. She expresses her experiences as follows:

...when you're moving in the campus, around the campus and you're moving let me say to your place that is when you'll see, 'how are these people reacting?' They'll just look at you, especially ladies, for the gentlemen I didn't see but for the ladies they'll look at you, gossip and even laugh. And then when you turn back and look at them, they can make these funny laugh that you can say, 'how can these people do this?'

Similarly, Lineo explains:

Other students call me [names] because I have a hump at the back. In sports I get criticized and excluded because of my height because they think I will not meet the expected performance.

Discrimination creates otherness perception about the student with stigma; they are belittled and unwelcomed by peers. Therefore, a student with disabilities' potential to explore their learning environment is limited by an unsafe social environment where it is not safe to interact with other students for fear of discrimination and bullying.

6.1.4.2.5 The students' participation in extramural activities

The university students engage in various extracurricular activities in which students with disabilities only participate as spectators because there are no relevant resources organized to enable their participation. Every student benefits from participation in extracurricular activities but students with disabilities are excluded and their participation has been neglected in social skills workshops run by the counselling unit. Since not many students with disabilities get admission at tertiary level, admitted students begin to think it may not be worth investing resources in a small population of students. Intervarsity games in which the institution participates do not have games for persons with disabilities. There are no resources built to promote their engagement in sports though sports activities for the rest of student population are financed by the university.

Asked to comment on their experience of the university life outside the classroom students gave the following comments.

Thabo observes:

...the social life here actually and the extracurricular activities are highly characterized by marginalization....

Karabo adds:

With regard to sports, of course, there is nothing prepared for me, I attend to be a spectator. We don't even have indoor games like chess, there's nothing.

Students had experiences of exclusion and the exclusion extended overtime made students accept it as a norm. Karabo reveals:

In terms of sports, every student needs entertainment which is provided by the university but if I am alone here at MIES, the university cannot provide facilities for me alone. Not too many students with challenges similar to mine reach this level, so the university may not invest resources for one or even five people.

Both staff and student participants agree that the university does not organize any social activity for them yet able-bodied students engage in many sports competitions including intervarsity games. The following are some of their responses. The SW Lecturer1 reflects:

Talking about sports, I understand that even our students when they go for intervarsity, it doesn't look like there are any students with disabilities that are involved, it is mainly because there're no sporting facilities with the result that students feel so much excluded and neglected.

The counsellor adds:

...there hasn't been any extracurricular programme for disabled students. We have excluded them in all activities that we do for instance, our sporting activities have not included them, even our workshop, the seminars that we have run, we never had any form for disabled students which says really this has been a terrible oversight.

Students with disabilities should not be excluded from activities in which everyone participates and the University dedicated a portion of its budget; excluding them in any part of the university

activities can easily influence exclusion in all or restriction in some university activities. Physical activity promotes physical and mental health and can create networks of friendships likely to have spinoff effects on academic work. The lack of attention to the welfare of students with disabilities reflects negatively on the Department of Student Affairs' ability to create access for and support of the needs of students with disabilities.

6.1.5 Access to curricula

Six students with disabilities said that at least one lecturer gave the support they required, while other lecturers ignored their needs. Some lecturers provide support that students require and give them attention while other lecturers are indifferent to the students' needs. Those who are indifferent use teaching and learning approaches which are rigid and inflexible to accommodate the learning styles of some students with disabilities. Students become disadvantaged as they are not able to study independently. The university provides certain concessions for students with disabilities, but the concessions are not suitable to all students granted the opportunities.

6.1.5.1 Inflexible Curriculum

Inadequate training of lecturers on diversifying teaching methods and techniques to accommodate students with disabilities leaves the students disadvantaged. An inflexible curriculum manifests in lectures that do not sufficiently use various methods, activities and media to enable a lecturer to be audible to students who have challenges with hearing. Students who encounter barriers taking notes fail to record lessons well due to a lecturer's inaudible voice. Lecturers also use illegible handwriting on the board, do not explain the learning content sufficiently, and depend on the chalkboard, and lectures which are paced too fast for students with disabilities.

6.1.5.1.1 Teaching strategies

Lectures at the university are offered mainly in a face-to-face manner. Students are, therefore, expected to take notes of the lecturer's verbal and/or written presentation on the board. Some lecture halls have no projection and public address systems. Students report that there are no prescribed or recommended books for their courses and this leaves them dependent entirely on lecturers' notes. Additionally, available textbooks in the library are not provided in alternative formats for ease of access to students with disabilities. There are excerpts below, which indicate that overreliance on writing on the board above other media of communication disadvantages

students with visual impairments. There may be little information shared verbally to include students who do not see like Thomas. Thabo opines:

I would like to see the education change in a sense that I'd like to move in the direction of having that, teaching materials being accessible in alternative formats.

Katleho is partially sighted and has challenges with reading small font:

You should understand that I'm writing with a pen, I was no longer used to pen and paper writing. My eyes normally get tired while writing.... Sometimes you would find that I would not be writing because questions would be written on the board and I explain that I can't.

It was also apparent that students with visual impairment experienced challenges in large classes, especially if they are not seated in the first rows of the class. A Business Administration (BA) Lecturer observes that:

Unless they sit at the front rows, it's going to be impossible for them to see particularly if they have some problems with visual or seeing from distance because most of the lectures are delivered without the use of projectors. Individual handwritings normally they are not that standard, some are not easily readable and in that case they'll always have the problems of seeing.

Thomas asserts:

When they teach, they don't take any consideration that there's a visually impaired learner in that class. They just teach not taking into consideration that there's someone who cannot see what they are pointing at.

Some students complained that lecturers were reluctant to make materials available in alternative format. Katleho maintains:

I think there should be a question paper in soft copy instead of a braille one.... on days in which I wrote two subjects in one day I did feel the challenge, I fell tired, my eyes could not bear it sometimes.

Motse notes:

I think if there were assistive technology ... and during the lectures there's recording so that even if I have missed here and there, if I want to replay the lecture, I could access it.

Lack of sensitivity to individual needs negatively affects students who cannot take notes or process information as fast as the rest of the class such as Karabo, and two students with visual impairments, whom print or written text may be inaccessible, and are bound to record lessons. The individual cases of three students below demonstrate. Karabo's experience reflects also inflexibility of teaching approaches when he reports:

I have bought a laptop which enables me to record lecturers when teaching but it still gives me a challenge in that as I sit in front in class, I don't have anything to give the lecturer to amplify the voice so that when he moves around I can still record the voice well. So when he's at the back the laptop cannot capture his voice clearly and I miss some information. Therefore the laptop still fails to help me capture all information shared by lecturers and until today I still don't know how to overcome this problem.

Katleho narrates:

I got a voice recorder, but what I can tell is that when you're about to revise you need to take time because you need to listen to all, let's say there's a two hours lecture and we have a total of fifteen weeks per semester. It means I have to listen to an entire two hours without selecting. That is the wasting of time. It's a wasting of time because a sighted person can go directly to sections he wants in his notes.

Norma relates:

As lecturers teach I use my laptop to record the lessons and let me tell you the disadvantage, the disadvantage of recording a teacher for two hours is that where they laugh, cracking jokes, it records everything. Now when you need to read for a test, you should sit there for two hours until that lesson is complete, this is different from someone who was using pen and paper for copying only important points of the lesson.

Evidence from these participants indicates that access to education for students with disabilities would be facilitated better if their lecturers accommodated them in the teaching and learning

processes. Students' efforts alone such as buying hardware to facilitate learning were not sufficient to enable access to lectures. Recording lessons other than having notes in alternative formats gives challenges to access. Each student can benefit from getting notes in alternative formats as students with visual impairments struggle with inadequate access to information.

6.1.5.1.2 The pacing of the lessons

Dependence on lecturers as the sole source of knowledge affected access to the curriculum tremendously as students with disabilities find it difficult to catch up with lecturer's pace. They miss most of the information presented in class. Karabo and Motse share their experiences of taking notes and attempts to write as fast as their peers without disabilities during tests and examinations.

Karabo explained his problem with pacing of lesson as follows:

If a lecturer does not cater for my speed in taking notes, it means I am left behind. Either I stop writing and listen or when I write I would miss certain parts of the lesson.

Motse noted how highly paced lectures affected him:

... I would struggle to catch it as fast as other learners.... Sometimes you ask the next day that you did not understand much of the previous lesson, and you find that the lecturer is not eager to get back to what was taught in that lesson whereas other students would have understood well.

Class deliberations based on the pace and ability of majority in class disadvantage students with visual disabilities in that some struggle with lecturers' handwriting. This problem may further reduce their pace as some students may struggle seeing information on the board, therefore, pace may not match their speed of processing the information. The student's views are explained below.

On the use of white board for recording lessons Katleho states:

I would not be writing at the pace of other students. They normally write faster than me, and when the lecturer is through with one side of the board, she would wipe off and write more questions. In such cases I would fail and I remember one of these lecturers would set another paper for me while another would read the questions for me after

writing them on the board. There are cases where I was promised another test which never came.

Further discussions with students reveal various ways in which students with disabilities cope with the challenges of lesson pace. Keletso says:

...see yourself after that, whether you pass copying from other students or doing what, it's all up to you.

A physically challenged Raphael asserts:

...we're just here like any other student, we just have to look around what's done, anything that could work for us, adopt that.

A FED Lecturer 2 opined that it was a challenge to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities while taught alongside their peers without disabilities. She opines:

I want to believe that at least if they were being taught separately they would be given enough support so that they can cope like other students.

Students stated that the pace used in their classes did not cater for their needs. They were usually left behind and no longer wrote notes or tests written on the boards. The students revealed that some lecturers did not entertain questions about previous lessons from which they were behind. A student stated that in one context a lecturer set a different question paper to the one he failed to write due to questions written on the board, another read questions to him after writing them while in one incident a lecturer never fulfilled a promise to give another test. Students feel that they are encouraged to find their own means to survive without support. One lecturer believed it was difficult to address the needs of students with disabilities while taught alongside students without disabilities.

6.1.5.2 Special Concession

One of the accommodations offered by the University is time extension during tests and examinations. For students with visual impairment, in the main campus and served by SENU, time accommodation is consistent for tests and examination as they are written in the laboratory under the supervision of the SENA. However, for tests written in lecture halls with peers, students with visual impairments feel disadvantaged because students are delayed as lecturers

forget to bring question papers in appropriate font size and in some cases there is no time extended for the students with visual impairments. Students also express varied views about time added for their tests and examinations. Keletso, who is a partially sighted student, argued that time added for her tests was insignificant given that there were delays in giving her question papers printed in the right font. She notes:

...sometimes they even forget to set the question paper. I'm delayed for my tests sometimes, and start after time, all those things....They come twenty minutes late and then afterwards, they'll say they give you twenty minutes extra. When you really calculate you find I didn't find a question paper in time, that twenty minutes that I'm given is actually covering the twenty that the question paper came late because they were still going to enlarge it and then bring it again.

Katleho, partially sighted student writes tests with peers and encounter problems that are different from those encountered by blind students. Most of Katleho's tests are written without time extension and he has accepted it as normal given that his classes start late in the evening and tests are written during class time. He states:

...as classes start late, we would be writing from 5 to 7 p.m. and at 7 p.m. lecturers expected everyone to be done without excuses. You should understand that I'm writing with a pen, I was no longer used to pen and paper writing. ... she would be expecting everyone to give out their answering scripts. Though she may not be speaking to me alone but when she says picks her bag and says she is going, you have no choice but give the paper.

On the other hand, a student with physical disabilities shared his experiences of support in the context of writing examinations. He narrates:

I mostly see support in times of writing tests and final examinations through addition of generous time after.

As students struggling with fine motor skills, Karabo and Motse are allowed an extra hour to each three-hour examination, this is different from thirty minutes given for a three-hour examination for both partially sighted and blind students. It is not clear how the distinction in

time accommodation is decided because staff and students have contradictory views and expectations on it. Karabo recounts:

...the doctor recommended that I should be given an hour`s extra time for every three hours and I manage to write within that time. Most of our examinations take three hours and I normally finish in three hours forty-five minutes, three hours thirty minutes depending on how demanding a paper would be. Tests are normally not long; it is normally one or two questions written in one hour. Lecturers do allow me to write beyond that hour.

This flexibility is confirmed by the MIES Lecturer 2 who is also a programme coordinator as she agrees that Karabo is given an extra hour. She states:

An hour or so but we usually have someone to be there to wait for him until he has finished writing, there is no basis, that is why I said we just wait for him until he finishes the work.

Blind students, on the other hand, feel that duration of tests and examinations is limited and their time accommodation might have been decided on by generalizing accommodation for all disabilities. Thomas narrates:

I`m reading braille, I`m reading with hands and at the same time I`m using hands writing on a laptop, typing. Yes, to type is not that easy for me, and writing tests and at the same time touching braille. The time is limited because the added time is only thirty minutes.

Norma also states:

...if a normal sighted person is reading a page, when the same page is brailed, not embossed as embossing is like translating, a normal printed page turns into three or four pages when brailed, it makes a pile. Feeling the braille is much work and is better if the questions are in a soft copy....

Students with visual impairments [partial sight] write tests in ordinary lecture halls with nondisabled peers. Keletso claims that lecturers fail to set test and examination papers with the

right font. She is delayed and twenty minutes that is considered extension usually covers time lost. Katleho, on the other hand, attended part-time classes scheduled for evening, and felt he had to comply with time set for everyone as test were taken late. Students with difficulties with fine motor skills, Karabo and Motse were allowed limitless time for tests and examinations. It was not clear how the distinction in time accommodation was decided for students with physical disabilities because staff and students had contradictory views and expectations about it. Blind students, on the other hand, felt that the duration of tests and examinations was limited and special concessions for them were inadequate.

6.1.5.3 Dependency on the part of students with disabilities

As a result of challenges experienced, students with disabilities resort to various survival mechanisms. One of the most commonly used strategies is reliance on fellow students for support. This lack of independence leads to poor access to curriculum. Blind and visually impaired students struggle to access reading material due to unavailability of books in alternative formats and appropriate fonts. Students also struggle to copy notes or follow lessons and seek support from peers to cover the missing material. Thomas noted that he depended on information downloaded from the internet to write assignments because library resources such as books and journals are not accessible:

Like when I write an assignment, I have to just check, my references or bibliography is only on the internet, accessed from internet. No books, unless someone could help me to find a book in the library.

In response to a follow up question on how he then uses the book his friends found for him, Thomas says:

They'd just read for me.

Katleho on the hand was not able to use computers as they had no magnifiers to enhance font and MIES had no computers fitted with JAWS. Access to learning material was difficult as he similarly states:

Access with regard to books and other learning material in suitable formats was not met at all. I had to ask people to read for me, but it was not easy as another person would be a student and they would be busy with their study themselves

Limited access to information was confirmed by the librarian, who pointed out that blind students mostly depended on peers to use library resources. He reveals:

Actually, in most cases they have their friends but in the case where there's no one, we go there and identify books and then bring books into that room....

Through discussions students with disabilities are able to learn some content they may have missed during the lectures. When other students would like to read alone or are too far to convene for discussion the students fail to learn. Thomas explains:

I'm coping through discussions with my classmates. Only discussion helps. I'm not independent because when they are busy with their works, or rather when they would like to read individually, I'll have to wait for them to come and discuss, and at that time there'd be nothing I could do. I just have to rest and wait for them to come.

Karabo noted that sometimes discussions are scheduled very late, content is just studied for examinations and there would be no time for meaningful learning:

I learn some of the content during group discussion but it depends how far time has advanced at the time of discussion. At times you only understand something when discussing for the exam, it is useless because you only memorise it for the exam and did not get it during normal lessons.

Fellow students can also provide secondary information, which is subject to distortions as Motse states with regard to copying notes from peers:

At times you look through notes of students from your region, only to find that the notes miss a section you wanted. Students copy notes to suit their needs rather than capture everything. You find that students are not able to explain good enough for you to understand.

A deaf student, Thetso highlighted that delays in securing a sign language interpreter makes her rely on other students. He says:

One of the students is helping me, assisting me with the interpretation services.

Dependency was also highlighted with regard to finding ways in the environment. This particularly applies to students with disabilities. The problem was related to lack of mobility training and orientation to enable the students to walk independently. Reflecting on his first year, Thomas recalls:

I had to find the company of someone, my closest friends...I think it took about a month to get to be used to these surroundings.

Dependency on peers for reading materials and maneuvering the environment limits the opportunities of accessing reading materials especially when their friends were also busy with their studies. It was also felt that notes or explanations from peers were not sufficient and could not substitute those of a lecturer. Students also depended on their peers for non-academic services such as orientation and mobility as well as sign language interpretation services.

6.1.5.4 Attitude of lecturers

Access to curriculum for students with disabilities is dependent on the willingness of the university staff to support them. Some university staff are cooperative. Lecturers, in particular, create time for the students and even provide them with notes in appropriate format while other members of staff are indifferent or even intolerant.

6.1.5.4.1 Supportive attitudes

Lecturers' availability for consultation by the students is considered a form of support. Some lecturers provide students with learning resources in alternative formats suitable for the students' needs. Students shared some positive experiences below.

Lerato shared the following with regard to mobility challenges preventing her to be on time to her subsequent classes. She opines:

There's the other [lecturer] who was teaching us and I had to explain to her, and she waited for me to arrive.

Katleho recalls:

One lecturer, in his first lesson in first year, asked about me.

Thabo declares the following support:

...it's been like it's only my ELG lecturer who had taken the initiative to ensure that actually I get an enlarged question paper when I write my exams.

And Katleho adds:

...it's only one lecturer who has consistently given me the notes.

Keletso indicates:

I had a lecturer who, I did statistics, she understood the situation and all that, she gave me notes.

Thetso also pronounces:

Ok for now eh, many lecturers are giving me notes, they give me notes every day after the lecture because I cannot write and my interpreter cannot write as well because she's a student. So she just focuses on what is being said in class and then afterwards the lecturer provides me with notes. And sometimes if I don't understand anything in class I go and consult the lecturers for them to explain thorough.

A Consumer Science Lecturer indicated that she made an effort to support a student with physical disability despite not knowing that she would be part of her class. She opines:

We try like I said that point of chairs; we had to scout for shorter chairs, plastic chairs.

On the other hand, students have different needs. Not every interaction that seems positive is received well by students with disabilities. For example, Lerato feels devalued when some of her lecturers do things for her as a result of her physical and mobility challenges. She declares:

I don't need to be treated that much special, I assume they take great care for me because sometimes there're these ones who think I cannot do anything and I feel like 'wow' how should it be like this?

Students with disabilities viewed provision of support as indication of good attitude and support. Receiving notes from lecturers and having the notes, tests and examinations in appropriate format. Special concessions were also viewed positively by students as a sign of positive attitude from their lecturers. Lecturers were viewed positively for creating time for students'

consultation. Additionally, one lecturer indicated that she made a student with physical disabilities comfortable by finding suitable chairs for her to use in class. However, certain incidents of positive behaviour from lecturers suggested that the concerned members of staff undermined the students' potential to execute desired behaviour independently.

6.1.5.4.2 Indifferent attitudes

Students with disabilities remind lecturers to give them notes or learning material, but some lecturers make promises which they do not fulfill. Students are anxious to make too many demands on the lecturers lest they offend them. Some students with visual impairments get resistances from their lecturers who argue that they were never informed about presence of a student with special needs in their classes. Some find it inconceivable that tests or examinations would be set without a paper in appropriate font for them as students with unique needs. There is also evidence that SENA intervenes on behalf of students with visual impairments in certain cases. Lecturers seem reluctant to give students with disabilities study materials and notes in alternative formats. Evidence also suggests that SENA sometimes intervenes on behalf of blind students. Participants explained Staff's indifferent attitude as follows.

As a partially sighted first year student, Thabo states:

If a teacher surely is used to writing on the chalkboard and the chalkboard is actually situated far away from the sitting position of the students, it is obvious that those with visual defects are going to be disadvantaged.

Keletso, also a partially sighted student, recounts:

I had to explain to my lecturers that I had this kind of a problem, because I could still see. Some of them didn't understand that I'm partially sighted and I need to have this big font, sometimes they even forget to set the question paper. I'm delayed for my tests sometimes, and start after time.... I don't need a lecturer who writes on the board because, normally I don't read in the board. Well, the lecturer can still do that and give me the material after because my belief is that, when you project and explain, other students will be writing what you are projecting and I'm not able to.

Keletso continues:

...others [lecturers], you'll have to remind them every minute that after this class I have to have this and then sometimes they don't prepare what they have to prepare....We can't say it was a mistake or anything if the facilities are not prepared for me to write a test [or] to write an exam.

As a blind student Thomas relates:

I think in class, like I said, lecturers do not know anything about me ... when they teach, maybe on the board they point and just saying this, 'you see this and that', and to me this and that is not clear. I don't know what is that. ... many times I meet lecturers who doesn't know anything about me. Like for the first time I'm getting into the class, it's like they're not orientated on how to teach a visually impaired learner.

Lecturers have to be persuaded to support the students as Thomas explains:

Yeah, but it's not voluntary, I'll have to tell them first, Yes I still have to approach them... They wouldn't and some I have approached but the time of exams will arrive without having nothing, and it's happening even now.

Katleho notes:

Other lecturers might have just been forgetful, which is human, while others normally said they knew nothing about me

Karabo claims:

I normally ask them, some do but others don't. There would be some who would say I will and you keep reminding them to the point where you end up feeling like you are seeking special attention....One may understand and say they would email the notes or give you handouts but another does not even try and you might end up offending them because they are human.

Support for students with disabilities is not automatic. It is a negotiated process. A Memorandum from the SENA to Dean-FED dated 12th February 2015 attests thus:

I hereby kindly confirm that Mr. Thomas will be sitting for his T323 examination this afternoon at 14:00. Consequently, he will be unable to attend his lectures, ELX3034 and ELG3044 scheduled for 14:10 and 15:10, respectively. Considering the importance of both the examination and the lectures to his academic and professional development, I humbly request that today's lecture notes and complementary course material be prepared and provided him by the concerned lecturers.

An indifferent attitude is reflected in a response by a FED Lecturer 2 about having a blind student in her class.

Last year I happened to have a student. I didn't know that the student was blind, so I gave tests and assignments as other normal students, if I can use the word normal, and the student proceeded to second year I don't know how because I'm not aware. There were no transcription that happened either from my part as a lecturer or from the part of the student.

Asked how possible this was given that she, FED Lecturer 2, was also a first year tutor and processed students' overall marks at that level, she proceeded:

Well I must admit that with this one I was absent for quite some time and during that time somebody else handled the marks.

Lecturers usually use the board to demonstrate and write notes with expectation for all students to copy notes, tests or activities but this method of teaching excludes students with visual impairments. Lecturers who do not explain themselves sufficiently as they demonstrate information on the board exclude blind students from their lessons. A lecturer admits that she had a blind student in her class but does not remember facilitating anything for him to access course material, tests and examinations. Access is constrained because the students' needs are not identified and when the students report their challenges lecturers do not readily support them. Students with disabilities have limited access to information in formats they need for study. They do not readily receive study material in alternative formats from their lecturers and this negatively affects their studies as some students indicated in 6.1.5.1.1 above that it takes a lot of time to listen to a recorded lesson.

6.1.5.4.3 Intolerant attitudes

Some students with disabilities expressed staff's tendencies for displaying intolerant attitudes toward them. They mentioned that staff appeared to be overburdened by their needs. Sometimes staff question legitimacy of students' needs. Lecturers conduct their lessons with no regard for student's needs and are not willing to respond to students' questions about the previous lessons. Students disclose their disabilities to lecturers whom they feel less discriminated by. Some lecturers seem to force themselves to support the students so much that some students indicate to the concerned lecturers that their problems are not as bad.

Keletso states that staff has tendencies to question students challenges. She shares:

The problem is that they sometimes question you, 'but you still can see', that's what they used to say at the [Department of Students Affairs] DSA. I think the people have changed, but they'd say 'you can still see', yes I can still see but the situation is different. I can't see like everyone else.

The impairment of the partially sighted student was not only doubted by staff of the Department of Student Affairs but by a lecturer too. A Sociology Lecturer comments:

FSS as a faculty has over two thousand students in fourth year, Ok!! Let's just put it like that. Now how possible is it for me to know them, I'm just saying.... I have never seen someone who has visual impairment in my class, if someone has visual impairment I think they'd be like me and be wearing spectacles. Yeah I have a couple of those, but wearing spectacles I don't consider it visual impairment. They can still see. Really, I didn't know that there was such a student in my class because I've never experienced anybody in class saying I can't see.

Keletso notes the following:

With partially sighted, I think it's more than worse because they'd even be telling you that, 'well, we see you can still see us', what kind of a lecturer says that to a student, because I'd like to believe that people should understand that we're different in our own ways and we have different problems.

At times students like Motse are afraid to ask questions as he explains:

In the next class when one asks questions concerning the previous lesson, some lecturers ask why you did not ask during that lesson.

Asked what happened when consecutive classes were set in lecture halls far apart for her ability to arrive on time for the next class, Lerato states:

I'll find some lecturers covering [going on with the lesson].

Thabo, in the focus group discussion, indicates:

It appears as though there's no willingness whether the expertise is there or not there, there's no willingness to take into consideration an issue of the disabled students.

Katleho has had mixed experiences with lecturers as he notes:

You could see that they were trying and at times they just forced themselves to work with me. Some of them would say that they need to be trained before dealing with my needs but I would assure them that my challenges were not severe.... There are cases where I was promised another test which never came. It wasn't good at all, in fact last year I had to supplement courses.

The findings indicate staff's resistance to address the students' needs. Their attitudes lead to students who refrain from asking for support while it is clear that their needs are not met. Students with disabilities have previously failed and/or supplemented courses due to insufficient support.

6.1.6 University policy on disability

The subsection has three subtopics, namely, current policy provisions, participants' views on policy provisions and suggested changes for an inclusive policy. An explanation of policy provisions on nondiscrimination in the 2006/2007 calendar and other institutional documents is made. A consultancy report on the development of Department for Special Education recommended that a special education policy be developed. Participants felt that there was no policy supporting an inclusive education given their experiences of lack of support and suggestions on issues that a policy needs to address were made.

6.1.6.1 Current policy provisions

The institutional Calendar contains regulations that are used to manage the institutional practices and regulate access to and participation in programmes within faculties. In this regard, the 2006/2007 calendar makes certain pronouncements regarding disability, non-discrimination and institutional commitment to support education of persons with disabilities. The consultant who was engaged to develop a Department for Special Education recommended that the institution should develop a special education policy to secure the rights of students with disabilities. Both students and staff state that the institution has a practice in which applicants are required to disclose their disabilities and are even promised support. Given the practice of admitting students with disabilities, there is confusion on whether the practice represents a policy which is poorly implemented or that the university does not have a clear policy. One of the regulations declares:

There is no racial, religious, gender or handicap barriers to admission (The institutional calendar 2006/2007:11).

The institutional Order of 1992 Part VII 51(1) on non-discrimination also reads:

No religious, racial, national, ethnic, sexual or political considerations shall be imposed upon any person in order to entitle him to be admitted to or employed by the University or to hold office therein, or to graduate thereat or to any advantage or privilege thereof (The institutional calendar 2006/2007:416).

The two policy statements reflect nondiscrimination which is a principle that can protect vulnerable groups such as students with disabilities if put into practice. The principle of nondiscrimination is further supported by a commitment declared by the institution in its information booklet that it would address the needs of students with disabilities. An extract from the booklet reads:

[it] is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities (Information Booklet 2015:2).

However, with all the policy statements in place a report of a consultant who was tasked to suggest ways for enhancing special education needs units suggested the need to do more. It indicates:

As part of the support services to the disabled students in the university, it is recommended that a policy concerning the rights of students be formulated and approved by Senate and other governing bodies (Special Education Consultancy Report 2008:31).

6.1.6.2 Participants' views on policy provisions

The reflections students with disabilities made about barriers they encountered, including inaccessible built environment, lack of social support etc. also meant that the nondiscrimination principle did apply to them. In this regard, students were asked if there was a special or inclusive education policy at the institution. All the students were not aware of any university policy on access to education for students with disabilities. There was just a speculation by some that the practice in which students are asked to disclose their disabilities might reflect some form of policy. Student participants explained their views below.

Thomas says:

I don't know any policy. Yes, except I heard that the policy of examination says that we have to spend, we have to be given an extra 30 minutes. That one I've heard about it because it was after experiencing bad effects of answering paper being taken away from me in my examination.

Raphael explains:

It's fair to say I don't know the policies at this level but I think I see the shortages. I see the shortages. I don't know if there are policies written but just not implemented and one does not see them. For example, I'm thinking of recreational services for us. I don't see facilities that I'd say, probably there is a policy which says we should participate in sport and based on again eh, accessibility to a certain extent to classes that are reached through stairs, I still wonder if there are policies really. I don't know, that is why I have

a lot of question marks if there`re policies. Except if, I don`t know, if they are there and not being implemented.

Raphael Continues:

Do I think the policy matches well with what happens? The policy is, we admit students with disabilities yet when they are admitted services are not so conducive to them.

Keletso opines:

Well the only part of the policy that I know for this university is that they do accept people with disability and they say that they`ll give them everything they need for their education. But in the process of that, there are so many challenges which hinder a person to get the information they promised or provide. The problem is the implementation, what happens in the ground. Well, I think the main problem is understanding of people towards the problem, yeah, that is what is lacking.... You tend to wonder, why, in the first place, did these people admit people they can`t assist.

Karabo also speculates about a policy but was adamant that his experience of the institutional life denied existence of a policy. He declares:

The policy should be clear, like every time after admissions here at MIES they hold orientation programmes, at the orientation people with challenges should have every intention of the university explained clearly but I currently know nothing about any policy. In the application form as you apply, there`s a section asking about whether you are physically or mentally disabled and they ask what support you need. As for policies I don`t know any. We are currently in a situation where it`s like we`re given a favour to study with others. Even if the policy is available we don`t know and we cannot also know if our rights are violated.

Lerato states:

They say you should state your disability and explain the special needs that you have, I think they have a policy, they just admit those students and there's no follow up or whatever things that the person needs to access education fully.

Katleho reflects:

I don't know even one. I have been thinking about policies since talking with one of my lecturers who learnt something about disability policies while on a trip in Tanzania. But the fact that I was admitted means that there's a policy of non-discrimination, and admission of every qualifying person, it doesn't have to end there. All material for studying whether books or anything should be made available.

The students' responses are consistently negative. They know nothing about a policy except for snippets of information referring to institutional commitments not observed in practice. Similar to students with disabilities, the staff participants stated that they were not aware of the institutional disability policy, but some believed practices such as asking students to disclose their disability statuses were indicative of a policy position. Staff and students' experiences indicated that the institution seems to do nothing beyond requesting students to disclose the data. To some, practices that lack support for students with disability clearly indicate lack of a policy. Below are some responses from staff.

The Sociology Lecturer narrates:

I don't know of any policies, but if students are able to be admitted and they're able to do the programmes and they're able to graduate I'm thinking that the policy should be there, something to guide the students.

Though the response from the sociology lecturer seems positive, she is unsure if the policy is present though, as a staff member, she is supposed to implement it. Her views are similar to those of students whom she assumes are guided by the policy. Therefore, her response does not refute the position of the consultancy report that there is no policy, and that one needs to be developed.

In the same way the FED Lecturer 2 reveals:

Well, I want to believe that there are policies, that one of including everyone but including them without support because they are just admitted. They are not discriminated against which is a good thing but there's no follow up to the very core of the students' business. Nobody followed them, nobody sees to it that they are comfortable and nobody sees to it that indeed we are allowing the system to absorb them without any problem. So the system in itself is not supportive to the students that they are admitting.

The FED Lecturer 2 similarly assumes there is a policy, but thinks it is not well implemented, thus, supporting students' experiences that the nondiscrimination principle is not applied in practice. Without proper implementation of the policy students do not receive services on an equal basis as others, hence discrimination. This nullifies the FED Lecturer 2's assumption that there is no discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Poor application of the policy is also reflected by the Social Work lecturer 1 who observes:

With national policy now there is something. At institutional level, the main problem is that you can have something like policy but the problem is eh, the policy is not such that it brings about, you know, any tangible movement in terms of provision for students with disabilities. You can have a policy like, "the university does not discriminate on the basis of disability", but what does that mean? The moment some potential students cannot even apply because of the nature of their disability, that's some kind of exclusion because the university does not have requisite resources for people with disabilities. There may be general policies but these do not translate to creating or developing infrastructure and facilities that enhance accessibility to services and buildings, all that.

The Social Work Lecturer 1 further maintains:

Ok, even with the application form which asks applicants to indicate, yes let's suppose we look at that in terms admissions and they indicate their needs but what I'm not so

sure is if there's really a follow up, they might indicate but is this happening, when they're here? They indicate their needs, but eh, one hasn't seen, you know, the sort of changes reflecting that they're also scrutinizing those forms in order to understand the needs and they're also trying to respond to some of those. So basically I'm trying to say while something may be in black and white, but it also relates to whether we're implementing, whether we then proceed to develop programmes and services for these students. This situation kind of remained the same for a long time.

The Social Work Lecturer 1's reflections show that current regulations are inadequate because they do not indicate who is responsible for implementing them, and do not easily lend themselves to programmes of action. This further supports the consultant's argument that a specific disability policy should be developed outlining how the rights of the students would be protected.

The MIES Lecturer 1 agrees:

We don't have policy documents but I think it's a policy of the university to open programmes for all students. But then the university is not very vigorous for finding or making coordinated effort to follow up students on that have disabilities. The university goal is not excluding, in the programmes, learners with disabilities. They're all welcome, but the follow up on the provision of required support on such a student.

Lecturers such as the MIES Lecturer 1 do not have an idea that the calendar has policy statements on nondiscrimination and this further supports perception that there is no commitment to implement the policy because if the policy were to be implemented by staff in their interactions with the students, it ought to be made known.

Lack of commitment is also pointed by the FED Lecturer 1 as he states:

I don't think that it is successful because this university doesn't make any effort. It does make effort but to a very little extent because it doesn't push the faculty, different faculties to teach about these different disabilities. Because I think, if the university really cares, in our meetings with faculties and departments, we would find people

talking about what to do with people with these disabilities. But I don't after how many years faculties would be sitting down to plan how these people should progress with their studies and also how to improve their programmes. Because we normally sit down when we think of making some improvements on certain programmes, we don't look at what these people are doing, their challenges. We are only thinking about these normal students.

Two lecturers in the host faculty for special education ought to be advocates of the policy, but as observed both lecturers and members of the faculty executive know nothing about the policy. This also suggests that disability issues are not prominent topics for discussion in the faculty leadership meetings. On the same note, if there was a special education policy, a member of staff in the disability support unit would most likely know it because it would be guiding his work. However, SENA shared similar sentiments with other participants.

He explains:

I can't say I'm aware of the policies except, no I really cannot say I am aware of such policies. No I haven't come across any as yet.

The staff participants each had a way of indicating lack of knowledge about a disability policy which, they believed, ought to have been publicised if available. This was further evidence that the institution was operating in a policy vacuum and available practices would not easily be reinforced if not well regulated.

The FOH Lecturer enlightens:

I'm not aware of any. Yes eh, I think it's further indictment against the, management, lecturers as well as students because we mix with students as management, lecturers and fellow students but we are not raising a voice even in cases where we see that some of the rights of these people are trembled underground. So I think we need to push ourselves a little bit more because I think, unless we are aware of the need and unless there are efforts for advocacy, then policies will be difficult because I think policies emerge out of situations where people are aware and they are making certain efforts

towards the achievement of such policies. Like I said, I'm not aware of any, there may be there but probably somebody who is responsible for the office which is responsible for taking care of such people would have made sure that those policies filter down to people who are responsible for taking care of the needs of such people.

On the other hand, the Counsellor expounds:

No policy, in fact the university has no policy on student support services whether they are disabled, whether they are international students, whether they are local students and unfortunately that is a requirement.

The Social Welfare Officer states:

Currently we don't have a clear policy from our department, we are working on it and it will cover the whole university in relation to the welfare of the students with disabilities.

Both members of staff from the social support department, DSA, confidently argued against presence of a policy. Similar to the host faculty staff as leaders in the students' academic support, the DSA staff ought to know about the policy since they afforded services that required them to apply social justice in allocating halls of residence, facilitating sports, dealing with discriminations case etc., but both members said there was no policy. Lack of a policy protecting the rights of students with disabilities could explain why the Department of Students Affairs had made no effort to develop sport facilities for students with disabilities resulting in negligence of their social needs.

Participants from two critical departments for academic support, the admission officer from the academic department and the librarian from the library also knew nothing about a special education policy. This means their services would not reflect equitable access.

The admission officer opines:

The idea of an admission policy has been an issue for quite some time. There is nothing like an admission policy, what we have is an admission criteria. An admission criterion

only affects how a person qualifies; in examining the results of this student, does s/he qualify or not?

The Librarian explicates:

You know the word policy is very tricky, we Basotho don't believe on policies. ... it's a challenge that we should have a policy, and I think it's a challenge to the university to have that policy so that we cannot duplicate eh, activities like the one we and the Faculty of Education has. If maybe the Faculty of Education can do it properly or the Library can do it properly, the policy could guide. But now we are only focusing only on helping people with disabilities to get what they want without policy, just focusing on the human being.

Both institutional Order of 1992 and the regulation on nondiscrimination were not implemented. First, their existence was overlooked by the consultant who suggested that the pronouncements cited in the institutional calendar are inadequate to protect the rights of students with disabilities and to ensure access to education for them, hence a recommendation for policy to be developed. Second, none of the participants said with any degree of certainty that they knew the policies protecting the rights of students with disabilities; the policy statements are not publicised and their mandate is not enforced. Though some participants argued that all students are admitted without discrimination, the students were not supported once admitted. It can be argued that the presence of a policy should influence structural changes, and to most participants, the fact that students with disabilities are just admitted but not supported means there is no policy. Therefore, the barriers they encounter as a result of inadequate support undermine the principle of nondiscrimination for which the policy statements advocate. The special education policy should spell out what the students are entitled to, how the departments should facilitate support of their rights and it seems the policy should also indicate what department should offer specific support services to avoid duplication of resources by the library and SENU.

6.1.6.3 Suggested changes for an inclusive policy

All participants felt that there should be a clear policy, which could influence how access should be managed. Participants explained what was wrong in the current policies of the institution and reflected on what they wanted an inclusive education policy to highlight for better

implementation. They indicated that a policy should outline rights of students with disabilities and state the kind of concession available at their disposal. A policy should be built consultatively and shared with all stakeholders, and most importantly, it should be implemented. A policy should also be reviewed periodically to assess its relevance.

Consumer Science Lecturer says:

I think there should be a policy, of course it should be established if it is not there, if it is there I'm sure it's not publicized enough or it's not strong enough.

Thomas said:

I think the first experience is that one of making choices in courses, I think we too would like to study in some different courses that are around this university. Yes, also there has to be some specific policies that will stipulate on us, starting with accommodation, to our education in classes, to our studies.

Lerato notes:

I think those policies have to be implemented. You don't just have to document them in the shelves, they have to be implemented, meaning, the information has to be shared among the staff and the students. And also there should be the follow up whether the information disseminated is being used or people have just learnt it and ignored it. I think there's also should be the other policy or I don't know how to say those things, but things that would force people to follow that policy and to do accordingly.

Lerato suggests that the policy should, in upholding the rights for the students, not only influence changes for physical accessibility but also condemn discrimination.

The participants see the need for an inclusive education policy to create access to all programmes offered by the institution. This implies research into ways of inventing study methods for inaccessible content such as map reading in geography and making graphs readable for students with visual impairments as this is the group of students denied access to some programmes. They

speak of creating mechanisms of support for the students with disabilities enrolling at the institution.

On the other hand some members argued that existing human and physical resources have to be used and improved to facilitate access to education at this level.

Karabo argues:

This is a public university, it should indicate clearly as to how it intends to support students with disabilities despite them studying part-time or full-time.

The FED Lecturer 2 opines:

... they can make use of an existing unit in the Faculty of Education to help them to build these policies, probably it would help because we have people who have specialized knowledge about this kind of students and they can make use of that knowledge and capacity of their own resource.

Keletso thought it appropriate that the university should secure requisite resources for support and induct staff on how to support students with disabilities. She opines:

The key areas of change firstly would be to make lecturers aware that there're those particular students and they need a different attention from the rest of the students. And then, again I think there should be preparation prior to students being admitted because we can't say it was a mistake or anything if the facilities are not prepared for me to write a test, to write an exam.

Similarly, Lerato thought staff and students should be inducted on how to work with students with disabilities. She opines:

I think it should point to the way students behave towards us and also the lecturers, how they should treat us, also the buildings, accessibility of the buildings.

This implies that the policy should promote respect for the right to self-determination for students with disabilities is reflected by Katleho who emphasises that students with disabilities need to be consulted. He opines:

For me what I can say is that we need to involve people with disabilities in doing everything that affect them. This can help in identifying their needs; people should not just assume that once a person is visually impaired, they need braille.

Katleho's reflections point to the lack of proper assessment of students' needs within the education system of Lesotho given his experience of unwarranted changes between different media of communication. Additionally, his views indicate the need to engage all stakeholders in planning and facilitating support for the students. Similarly, another student describes the need for engagement of all university stakeholders so that none is left ignorant of their role in supporting the students. He argues for the need to prioritise the needs of students with disabilities.

Thabo states:

The policies should be designed in a way that ... students with various disabilities are prioritized within the university... be given some extracurricular activities that are designed for them alone. On the other hand we can talk about aspects such as the correlation between the policy makers as well as workers the in the sense that the policy makers or the academic staff in general can talk about an idea of them having a basic contact on daily basis. ... If there is that intertransfer of information between the two parties as mentioned, I think the issue can be well addressed.

The Counsellor states:

...this institution should have policies that are owned by the people working here to direct them. there are no guidelines, so whenever there's change of administration, it look more like we depend on the personality and the interest of the current leader and that affects the progress of the university

Participants' utterances are indicative of the need to respect the students' rights for equitable access to the university resources. They also suggest that it should be participatory; all key stakeholders need to be engaged and informed on responsibilities of various members of staff. Closely related to participation of various role-players is ensuring that the policy gets implemented and effects desired change.

On the other hand one participant thinks that effective and efficient policies are reviewed regularly. Raphael suggests:

I don't know if they review, how frequent they review their policies. These very policies for disabled students, do they even evaluate themselves, I don't know who should evaluate the university or, but evaluating this kind of policies involving disabled students. Like the one I'm saying, I apply and I don't know if it should be a policy or they are just failing to communicate,

Participants feel that a policy should be publicised, implemented and its efficiency reviewed. The policy should be developed consultatively with all key stakeholders such as the staff, all students including those living with disabilities. Services meant for students with disabilities should be organised according to their needs and provided by qualified and trained staff. There should be a clear indication that the needs of persons with disabilities are prioritized.

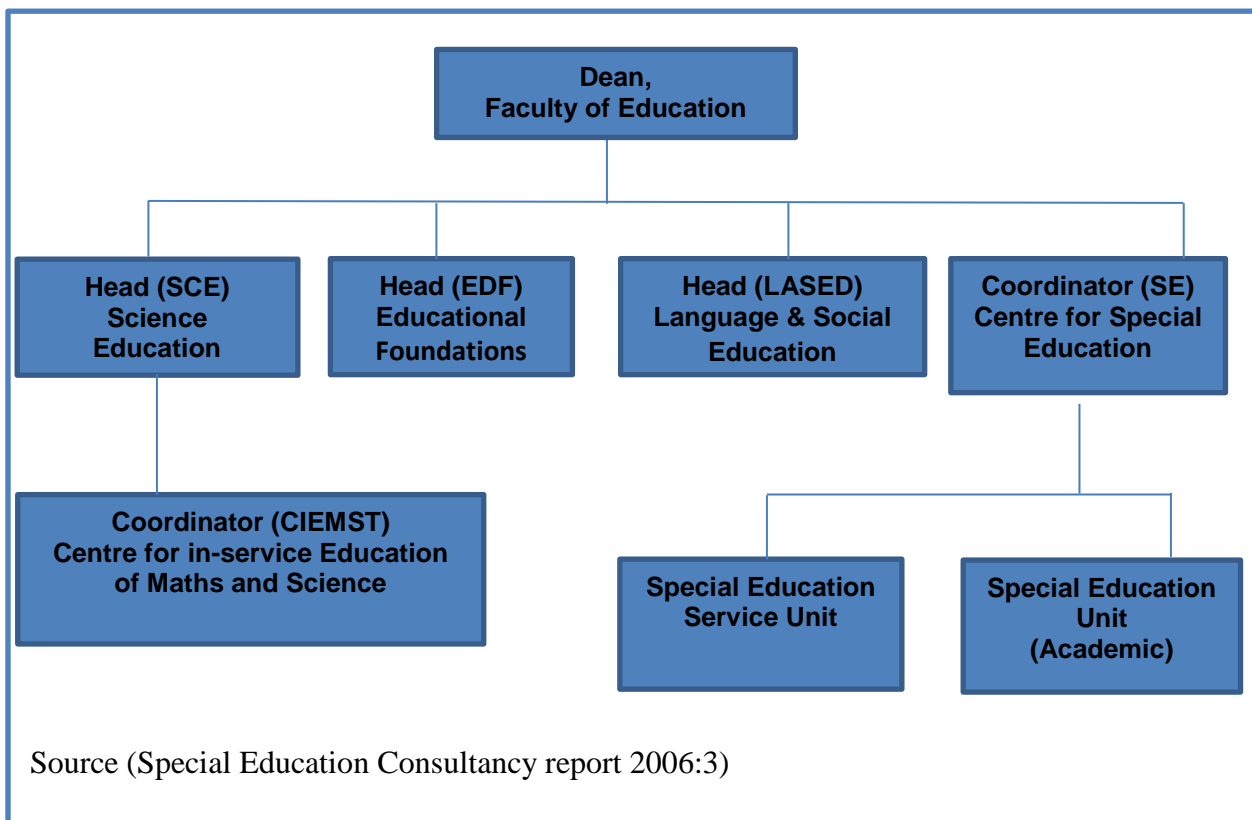
6.1.7 Management of inclusive education

The findings reveal challenges that have negatively affected the process of establishing a Department of Special Education meant to facilitate access for students with disabilities at the institution. Constant changes in the leadership of the institution from the Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor to Deans and Heads of department negatively influence continuity in implementing policies. As a result of these changes in leadership, the development of a Department of/Centre for Special Education has been delayed. The delay has negatively affected daily management of disability issues such overseeing needs of all students with disabilities which would have been addressed by employment of additional staff in SENU, as per the recommendations made in the consultant's report.

6.1.7.1 Establishment of the special education department (SED)

In section 6.1.4 it was indicated that the university established a single position for a Special Education Needs Assistant in 1999 to support students with visual impairments. As evident in the documents reviewed below, in 2005 the institution sought to improve support to students with disabilities by establishing a department which would manage access to education for students with disabilities. The department would be aligned with existing structures of the Faculty of Education but be subdivided into academic and service units as demonstrated by Table 6.1 below. The proposal to establish a Special Education Department was developed by one consultant and reviewed later by another before it could be implemented. Both consultants recommended employment of five teaching staff for the academic unit and seven additional associate staff. The SENU staff complement would consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Brailist, Sign Language Expert, Speech Therapist, Audiologist, Technician, Secretary and Special Education Needs Assistant position (already filled) (Special Education Consultancy report 2008:19).

Table 6.1: Proposed Centre for Special Education in the Faculty of Education.



The key contribution to support of the department of special education would be additional staff to expand support services beyond just one type of disability. Additionally, availability of staff in the service unit would mean the unit could sensitise academic and support staff as well as students at large about the needs of students with disabilities.

6.1.7.1.1 Influences of the senior management on students' support

There was a series of internal communication memoranda about establishment of a special education department. On the 9th March 2005, the university management wrote to the Faculty of Education to facilitate the improvement of special education services, hence increase access. The Faculty of Education would be better positioned to host the department given expertise on education issues. The focus would be on facilitating access to education for students living with physical disabilities and visual impairments, while the department would address other pertinent issues about disabilities. On the 24th January 2006 acting Vice Chancellor informed the Faculty that he wanted the special education programme to start soon and asked the Faculty to name a consultant who would be engaged to propose how the department would be structured. The Faculty was also requested to report on a trip members had taken to learn about special education elsewhere. The first proposal to establish a Centre for Special Education was approved by Senate on the 12th March 2007 but its functioning was said to be subject to availability of funds. The Faculty was to work on strategies of making the Centre work. The first recorded communication from the Faculty to management requested appointment of an interim head for Special Education and the request was approved as a temporary measure pending the Faculty's proposal for the headship position routed through formal channels of the institution.

After completion of the revision of the Special Education programme proposal by the second consultant (final draft submitted in March 2008), the 2nd Dean wrote to request for establishment of a Special Education Department. The Registrar, as secretary to Senate, advised the Faculty of statutory processes that had to be followed to establish a department, (see appendix XIII for a Memo dated 02/02/2009). However, the proposal for an academic programme was approved by Senate on the 27th March 2009 with a requirement that the Faculty would submit a budget to the office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor as facilitation for the programme to run. On the 4th March 2010 the acting Vice-Chancellor reacted to the Dean-FED's MEMO in which he requested minimum teaching staff for the Special Education programme. The VC promised that the request

would be considered. The last of these communication series was on the 30th January 2013 where the 4th Vice-Chancellor requested the 3rd Dean-FED if Special Education programme could stop being offered to Faculty of Education students. For the purpose of this study, deans for the Faculty of Education are enumerated as 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th because from 2005, when the University management conceived the idea, to 2016, the Faculty has been led by four different deans. In the same period of approximately 11 years the University has been led by 6 different Vice Chancellors, three substantive and three acting during transition periods.

Communication from the institution's management to the Faculty of Education (FED) leadership to improve special education service was made through a memorandum. For details of the MEMO from the Acting Registrar to Dean-FED dated 9th March 2005 see appendix ix.

The 1st Dean of the Faculty of Education, noted: "very urgent" and copied the MEMO to heads of departments and two members of staff on the 14th March 2005. Ten months later another MEMO requested the Faculty to recommend consultant to establish a department of special education and also report on trips members took to universities outside the country to learn about special education issues. For details of the MEMO from the Acting Vice-Chancellor to Dean-FED dated 24th January 2006 see appendix x. The Dean-FED noted, 'filing' on the MEMO from the Acting Vice-Chancellor on the 21st June 2006, almost six months later. The third communication which still came from management was to inform the Faculty of Education that a proposed Centre for Special Education was approved by Senate. The Registrar's MEMO to Dean-FED on 12th March 2007 reads:

RE: Establishment of a centre for special Education

At its 277th (Ordinary) meeting, Senate approved the proposed establishment of the Centre for Special Education within the Faculty of Education subject to availability of funds.

You should set in motion the strategies of establishing such a Centre in close collaboration with the Vice-Chancellor.

The 1st Dean noted 'filing' on 10th April 2007.

The leadership of the Faculty changed in August 2007 while the leadership of the university, in the form of a new Vice-Chancellor, had also changed in 2006. The 2nd Dean and 2nd VC as new officials continued to support the initiative to establish the Centre or Department of Special Education as the 2nd consultant proposed. Details of a MEMO from Dean-FED to the VC dated the 28/09/2007, in which the Dean requested appointment of an interim Head of special education to facilitate development of the department and expand support services, is attached as appendix xi. This MEMO is the first recorded communication from the Faculty of Education to the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor responded to the Dean by writing notes on the Dean's MEMO on the 2nd October 2007:

The note reads:

I approve this request as a temporary measure but the establishment must go formally through Senate.

Critical to note are the Dean's statements such as "monitor its activities" and "attend to matters relating to its growth", while the Vice Chancellor, on the other hand, agreed but indicated that to establish headship position, the faculty had to write a justification and submit for approval by appropriate university structures.

The 2nd Dean facilitated establishment of the department by revising the 1st proposal as evidenced by submission of a report and revised proposal by the second consultant in March 2008 entitled: "Draft Report on the Establishment of a Special Education Unit/Department. Later the 2nd Dean-FED wrote a MEMO to SENATE Secretary (The Registrar) requesting the establishment a Special Education Department dated 28th January 2009. The MEMO to this effect is attached as appendix xii. The registrar's response to Dean-FED on the 2nd February 2009 (see appendix xiii) as indicated that establishment of a department and approval of a programme seem distinct activities. Establishment of a department was a statutory exercise with due processes to be followed until approved by the state. The university Senate approved the revised programme as evidenced by the Registrar's MEMO to Dean-FED dated 27th March 2009. The MEMO reads:

Special Education Revised Programmes: B.ED, BSC ED, BSC. Agriculture Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education (PGDSE)

At its 293rd (Special) meeting Senate received and considered the paper on reviewing Special Education programmes. It was agreed to approve the reviewed programmes as follows:

- a) They are long overdue*
- b) There is need to submit the budget to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor's office for approval before implementation and,*
- c) To check the correct word/title of the course "impaired" or "challenged" and use the one that is suitable.*

The Special Education programme proceeded in 2010 after the 2nd Dean-FED wrote a justification to Acting VC for minimum teaching staff. The acting VC was the 3rd leader of senior management since management's proposal in 2005. The MEMO below was from the 3rd VC responding to the 2nd Dean's request for minimum teaching staff. The MEMO dated 4th March 2010 reads.

RE: Request for Minimum Teaching Staff in Special Education Needs (SEN) Programme

Please refer to your memorandum of 12 February 2010 (received on 17th February 2010) on the above subject matter.

Your request for teaching staff in the Special Education programme will be submitted for consideration for the next academic year.

The communication seeking two academic positions was the last official exchange between 2nd Dean-FED and the university management. Since then, there is no record from 3rd and 4th Deans on either the establishment of the department or proposal for additional staff to the Special Education Needs Unit, the unit remains with one position that focuses on support to students with visual impairments as highlighted in section 6.1.4.1 above.

The last recorded influence of senior management was negative. The 4th Vice-Chancellor inquired from the 3rd Dean-FED if Special Education programme could be ended. The MEMO from a Vice-Chancellor to Dean-FED dated 30th January 2013 reads:

RE: Programmes

Can you please advise if the following programme is on your future agenda – just write yes or no next to it and return to me please by February 4.

- Special Education

The 3rd Dean-FED stated that she needed the programme to continue. The 4th Vice-Chancellor's enquiry shows how the institution's senior leadership differed on special education issues.

However, it is the senior management of the institution which mandated the Faculty of Education to broaden the special education services and from this initiative consultants were engaged, recommendations made and approved by the institutional management. It is critical to note that if all recommendations made by the consultants were implemented access to education for students with disabilities would have been enhanced. That is, there was a recommendation to develop a special education department with functional leadership and full staff complement meant to broaden support services for underserved students with disabilities. The second consultant also recommended that the university develop a special education policy to protect the rights of students with disabilities. Therefore, delay to establish a fully functional department of special education has undermined access to education for students with disabilities.

6.1.7.1.2 Understaffing

There is lack of documented evidence, during leadership of the 3rd and 4th Deans that the Faculty has made any proposal to expand services of students with disabilities. There seems to be no effort to increase the staff complement of SENU so as to improve services offered by the unit. Issues of disability support are not prominent in the faculty as members of the Faculty Executive indicate below.

At the Faculty leadership level a MEMO from the Faculty of Education Senior Assistant Registrar to Head-Department of Educational Foundations (EDF) dated 8th April 2011 reads:

Please note that, at its meeting on Friday, 1st April 2011, the Faculty of Education Executive Committee resolved that the Special Education Unit should be attached to, and placed under, the Department of Educational Foundations for administrative and other related functions and activities until further notice when new arrangements will have been made.

The MEMO makes no further clarification on the reasons for the decision to put Special Education under EDF and also left duration of the merger open-ended. However, this meant that the faculty was halting attempts to create special education as an independent department as only the office of the Dean is the only one that has mandate to suggest establishment of a department. Two members of the Faculty of Education who fully participate in its leadership activities claimed to have limited knowledge about disability support services at the university, and of the two, one is a member of the department under which special education was placed.

The FED Lecturer 1, who had over six years of tutoring and participation in the Faculty executive, notes:

...we are having some disabilities, I mean disabled students here but I've never had any, we never have any discussions from time to time about the life of these people in this university. They're being excluded in the university here because we normally hold meetings in the Faculty, we hold meetings as Faculty to discuss how we can improve our programmes. But we never held anything, said anything about these programmes that would be suitable for these people... what developments should be made regarding these programmes, regarding the materials which these people need and all that. So the university is silent about all that.

Another FED Lecturer 2, who also had over six years of tutoring and participating in the Faculty executive, opines:

But as I see it now we're not giving them support, we're just allowing them to fend for themselves and I don't think it's ethical.

Documents in the special education file reveal the decision of the 3rd Dean and the Faculty Executive to place Special Education under the Department of Educational Foundations. However, the communication gave no rationale for doing so and left the duration open-ended. The two participants from the Faculty of Education who were tutors and members of the Executive, suggested that the needs of students with disabilities were not in the Faculty of Education agenda. The participants felt that the students were left to survive by themselves, without support and as such their access to education is constrained.

6.1.7.2 Delays in procurement processes

Decisions by the leadership of the Faculty of Education created challenges in 2014/2015 academic year that restricted access to education for blind students enrolled at the university. Evident in the documents found and analysed is the experience of Thomas whose learning was compromised for a period of about six months by events described below. Thomas was affected by resignation of the university's first SENA who left with his personal computer that installed valuable software for running the SENU's Embosser machine. Though a request had been made to the university bursary to buy SENA a new laptop and retrieve his personal laptop with the software, the procurement process was delayed. It was stated that the delay could have caused the student emotional problems. During the period he did not receive notes and other study material in braille and also failed to write tests. He wrote to the Dean-FED making her aware that he would miss four of the first semester examinations and requested that his problem be addressed. Writing rescheduled examinations for Thomas was a huge inconvenience as he had to miss classes, write a test on the same day as the one scheduled for the examination, thus, limiting time for preparing to study for examinations, tests and attending normal classes.

Though Special Education was placed under EDF, there are incidences where SENA seems to communicate directly to the Dean rather than through the head of the department. The justification to buy a laptop for Mr. Jeff below results from the 3rd Dean allowing the 1st SENA to install a R30,000 university software in a personal laptop with no documented evidence that other options were exhausted.

A MEMO from Head-EDF to Bursar dated 8th September 2014 reads:

RE: Request for a laptop for Special Needs Assistant

I wish to submit a request for a laptop for Mr. Jeff [Pseudonym] in exchange of his personal one. This is based on the following issues: while employed as a Special Needs Assistant he did not have a computer in his office and the agreement was reached between himself and the then Dean to have specialized software for visually impaired students installed in his personal laptop since he could not function without it. Unfortunately, this is a single licensed user software and therefore cannot be installed again in any other computer.

Moreover, it cost the university more than R30 000 to purchase it. I therefore, request that instead of incurring another expense for a software, it would be cheaper to buy a laptop for Mr. Jeff and then acquire his laptop which has the software in question installed....

In this extract, the head of Educational Foundations Department writes that a decision to install the software was between SENA and the Dean, this gives a hint that the Dean and SENA worked directly and made decisions independently from the department under which the special education needs unit was placed. Evidence suggests that the first SENA left the university service on the 1st of April 2014, but the Faculty of Education and Department of Educational Foundations never replaced SENA nor engage another person until about five months later. This resulted in students supported by SENU facing barriers as a letter from Thomas to Dean-FED dated 1st December 2014 explains.

Dear Madam

I am a visually impaired student in the Faculty of Education majoring in English Language and Theology. I am aware that I am unable to write these coming examinations which I am to commence on the 2nd to 14th of December 2014 as I [am] suppose[d] to write four courses.

My plea to you is to be granted a possibility to have an exception or special examination. This is due to the lack of facilities that I use to read and write, since the

beginning of this semester, I did not have notes, handouts and everything that necessitate to be transcribed into Braille. In this case, it is understandable that I did not write any test and assignment. For that reason, it is also apparent that I will also be incapable of writing examinations.

I will be grateful if you take my petition and hope I will be given enough time to revise after all these are fixed.

Besides communication to buy SENA's laptop made in September, there seems to have been no communication to and about the student's lack of support in the special education file. The letter from Thomas itself does not refer to any earlier communication with the Dean or other university officials. This is made evident by the Dean's response noted on the letter of the student on the same date, 1st December 2014. The 4th Dean noted:

'Me Tutor Year 3

Please establish which courses are affected in the case of this student and furnish my office with these so that I can take up the matter urgently with Dean of the relevant faculty.

On the 3rd of December 2014, the Dean-FED made the first formal note which was a follow-up to communication from Head-EDF to Bursar on 8th September 2014. The Dean's MEMO was addressed to Bursar and copied to Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dean-Faculty of Humanities, Head-EDF, Tutor-Year 3 and SENA. For details, the MEMO is attached as appendix xiv. This MEMO makes reference that the second SENA, employed in September 2014, who frequently inquired about the replacement computer but the Dean was addressing the issue for the first time since the request letter of the 8th September. It seems the Dean was prompted by the letter from Thomas, which was directed to the office, to act on the challenges the student faced for five months. Another blind student doing degree in Law was similarly affected by the lack of support but this study could not establish how the experience affected him because, as noted, he committed suicide in March 2015 before data collection for this study commenced.

Access to education for Thomas was compromised as demonstrated by rescheduling of four of his first semester examinations. Normally students are allowed two weeks without lessons, tests or assignments in order to revise for examinations. However, this was not the case with Thomas who had to write rescheduled examinations. He had to miss classes and reschedule tests to write these delayed examinations. For example, SENA wrote a MEMO dated 13th April 2014 which he routed through Dean-FED to Dean-FOH. He notes:

RE: Test reschedule to accommodate [Mr. Thomas]

It has been brought to the attention of the special education needs assistance office that [Mr. Thomas] is due to write a test (ELX3034 test 2) at 14:00Hrs on the 23rd April 2015. This time, sadly, clashes with that set for his T302 examination (14:00Hrs, 23rd April 2015).

Considering this situation, and taking account that the ELX3034 course has three classes on Thursday (at 10:00Hrs – 12:00Hrs and 14:00Hrs), I humbly propose that [Mr. Thomas] be allowed to write the test at 10:00Hrs on the same day as this will give him the opportunity to sit for T302 examination at 14:00Hrs

I hope that this sincere request will meet your approval

The incidents involving installations of software in the first SENA's personal computer, his resignation for the university, subsequent efforts to replace his personal laptop resulting in rescheduling of examinations for Thomas, reflect documented evidence of restricted participation of students with disabilities on an equal basis with others. The student's writing of four examinations during the normal lessons in the second semester meant that he had to study four additional courses to those studied by peers in the same year and programme, while at the same time fulfilling requirements for tests and assignments in other courses like his classmates. This also leaves speculative conclusions that the blind Law student could have had this experience as too much to bear especially as there is no correspondence on how he would be supported for his courses that were affected.

6.1.7.3 Lack of information about services provided by each department

The Special Education Needs Assistant though dedicated to supporting education for students with visual impairments has not worked with the library staff on mechanism of creating access to the library materials. He transcribes material such as notes provided by students or their lecturers. The librarian similarly knew that SENU had ICT resources but understood little about the services offered by the unit, and the library duplicated the services. Equally, the Department of Student Affairs was making plans to enhance resources on disability support but the department had not interacted with SENU sufficiently to know how it operated and learn about its projected development. Lack of communication between units of the university was observed by participants not directly engaged with the units concerned and the poor communication may result in excess resources due to duplication while the resources could better be used to complement each other.

The Special Education Needs Assistant was asked a direct question on how his office worked with the library on ensuring access to study material. Below are questions he was asked and answers he gave:

Researcher:

To what extent is your office responsible for making available, soft copies of the books or any other material that are in the library?

SENA:

Eh, for things such as notes, we, the office relies on the lecturers. If and when lecturers have notes to give to students, they usually send the copy of the notes either as a soft copy via email or as a hard copy. So if they are a hard copy they would be scanned, and transcribed afterwards and it's the same process if they, it's not strictly the same process if they are soft copies because I can just transcribe without the need of scanning. So we rely a lot, we rely heavily on the lecturers.

He narrates:

I'm not sure because I've not seen those ones, yeah but I remember while Mr. Jeff [1st SENA] was working there, [he] came here and he was also helping us on the, eh, putting the software into that machine, the one that we're using here. So I haven't seen that or those computers there.... I think this one in the library because we have internet in there, so they could do anything.

The Librarian did not know that computers in SENU were connected to internet too marking presence of another computer with JAWS in the library duplication. This is a challenge to access because the library does not either transcribe books into braille or delegate personnel and to read inaccessible reading material for students with visual impairments.

A Social Welfare Officer was asked in section 6.1.6.1 if there was any communication between his department and SENU in the Faculty of Education and he indicated that there was no interaction. However, his department was about to establish an office dealing with students with disabilities. He states:

So we are hoping to have a special office which will work directly with these students.

Similarly, the Student Counsellor said in response to a probe on what relationship the counselling unit had with the Special Education Needs Unit:

NO, not one that I'm aware of, the challenges in this office is that when I came into this office there weren't any policies that created awareness how the counselling unit could interact with other departments and faculties. So we are in the process of trying to find our way to reach towards people who may need our services.

The SW Lecturer 1 suggested that poor communication affected facilitation of access to education for students with disabilities negatively. He notes:

There's no communication, you know, the offices that exist are also not visible in terms of communicating with the various units, various departments and also even the students for them to get to know and be aware of services that might be available.

The findings reflect the university's lack of leadership on disability support issues. Available university services are ill-coordinated and fragmented across departments which do not communicate among themselves. In this regard it would be difficult for the university to channel limited resources to build efficient support services and plan accordingly to improve areas that are underserved. Little is known about what the university does and how efficient it is so that it could inform future plans.

6.1.8 Access at lower levels of education

Access to education at tertiary level for students with disabilities is greatly affected by the kind of skills, knowledge and support students with disabilities get at primary and post-primary levels. It is argued that few students with disabilities get grades which make them qualify for entry at HEIs. This results from poor human and infrastructural resources that facilitate access for students with disabilities at lower level of education. It is only a negligible number that qualifies for tertiary education.

6.1.8.1 Reflections on students' Challenges

Participants argued that access to tertiary education cannot be fully understood by only studying experiences of students who qualify to enroll as there are many who fail to qualify because of challenges faced at lower levels of education. To illustrate, one student with visual impairment used three media: print media and pen and paper, Braille, and ICT before going back to print media and pen and paper. The student did not have to change media but there was need to increase font size to 16 to access printed material but the swap between these media came with waste of financial and time resources for the student. Another student ascribed her success at lower levels of education to change of environment from a school less supportive to the one which accommodated her needs. Students with disabilities who are not supported at these levels drop out in large numbers. The following excerpts describe the link between how the education sector support students with disabilities at lower levels and their access to tertiary education. The SW Lecturer1 states:

Maybe the other background that, I don't know if it is relevant.... Eh, you look at lower level, primary, high school, secondary, those facilities; issues of access are not addressed seriously. And so what then happens is that, it is only a very negligible percentage that reaches university level.

Keletso, as partially sighted student, expatiated that access to university is said to be open once a person has good grades. However, studying efficiently at secondary schools was a challenge.

She opines:

Well, the education is accessible but the difference is that most people who have my challenge don't normally get a chance to be at this level.

She added:

[Students] encounter lots of problems during the course of studying ... most of the time there are very few people who come at tertiary and then, there are many people who are down there and some don't even go to school.

Unless teachers at primary and secondary levels of education are trained on special education identification, assessment and support, most students with disabilities may not persevere to reach tertiary. Katleho, a 29 year old partially sighted male student, in the third and final year of a diploma, had to swap between three media of learning; from pen and paper, to braille, to computers using JAWS and back to pen and paper at the time of interview and study at the university.

Katleho narrates:

If memory serves me well, in 2001 I was in secondary school and it was only in 2003 when visual impairment became prominent and disabling. ... I stayed home for some time, and then came to St. Catherine where they told me about the Mohloli oa Bophelo Centre at Ha-Tsosane where I learnt braille. From Ha-Tsosane I went straight to St. Catherine and I took my five years there. Then from St. Catherine I went to Cape Town. In there I was doing marketing, and ... I came back home [prematurely]. That is when I decided to go to MIES. In Cape Town I was using a computer so it wasn't hard for me to learn as the computer was installed with Jaws software, so it was helping me to write and read. I was able to enlarge the writing there, everything was going well. At St. Catherine I was only using braille and in Cape Town I was also accessing the books

through computer. So but here at MIES I was going to school like everyone, just doing my studies like sitting in class listening to the lecture, recording with a voice recorder, I got a voice recorder. I think I'm looking less like people who are visually impaired because the difference in the class is that the font size that was used for me was different from others in the class, it was 16.

In the quotation the student seems to feel comforted that he studies less differently; he has adapted and is treated less like a person with visual impairment. However, his experiences at lower levels of study reflect resilience and perseverance which many students with disabilities may not have.

Keletso ascribes her success to reach university, to her change of environment at high school as follows:

I'd refer to my high school experiences, well I'll start with when I was in Form A which I did in Lesotho and then moved to South Africa, my teachers couldn't treat me the way I was supposed to be treated because I couldn't see in the board ... people get discouraged right there and then, they don't get the assistance that they need, and they drop out.

6.1.8.2 MOET's Efforts to address the challenges

The claim that lack of support at lower levels of education may contribute to lack of progression within the education is shared by the Ministry of Education and Training which recognised the need to induct as many teachers and adopt up to 20% of its mainstream schools into the inclusion agenda. In 2005 the Ministry estimated that only 4.8% of its schools were inclusive and planned to increase the number of inclusive schools tremendously in a period of ten years. Incidentally, two consultants who were engaged at different times each concluded that access at tertiary education was influenced by how teachers supported students with disabilities to succeed beyond lower levels of education.

Inadequate staff training on Special Education related skills is noted in the Ministry of Education and Training's Sector Strategic Plan 2005 – 2015. The sector strategic objective 2, targets 2.1,

2.2 and 2.3 and all target activities speak to issues of training in special education. Table 6.2 below presents how the Ministry perceived the need for training.

Table 6.2 Needs for training as perceived by the Ministry of Education in Lesotho

Strategic Objectives	2005-2015 Targets	Activities
2. To increase access for children with SEN/disability	2.1 Significantly increase access for children with SEN/disability by 2015.	1. Integrate more schools into the Special Education programme.
		2. Provide targeted bursaries to learners with special needs to ensure full access to quality educational opportunities.
		3. Make classrooms, toilets and other school facilities physically accessible to learners with disabilities.
		4. Facilitate establishment of three resource centres to cater for children with visual impairment, hearing impairment and mental retardation.
	2.2 Accelerate inclusion/integration of children with SEN/disabilities from 4.8% to 20% by 2009 and 40% by 2015.	1. Carry out feasibility studies to determine the level of demand for secondary education for learners with SEN/disabilities and select schools for integration.
		2. Build capacity for 20 percent of secondary schools to integrate learners with SEN/disabilities.
		3. Provide in-service training for 100 teachers per year in different areas of specialization.
	2.3 700 teachers trained per year on SEN identification and assessment skills.	1. Intensify community awareness campaigns targeting families that have children with disabilities.
		2. Train teachers in identification and assessment skills.

(Ministry of Education and Training, 2005:107)

Similarly, in the background to the need to establish a department of special education two consultants, engaged by the institution, highlighted that there were high levels of attrition of learners with disabilities at lower levels of education because of inadequate support.

The first proposal for the Centre for Special Education at the university reads:

Very few students have gained access to post primary school level. One of the factors that affect poor access to post primary school education is the lack of teaching staff that are educated in dealing with students with disabilities and teachers who have the technical knowledge to teach children with varying disabilities (1st Consultancy Report 2006:2).

The second consultancy report (2008:2) which revised the 2006 proposal, noted:

Prior to now, not much emphasis was placed on the provision of secondary education for the disabled. The alarming drop-out rate of SEN pupils from school due to lack of qualified teachers adequately trained to cater for the needs of disabled children integrated into the regular class, justifies the establishment of a Special Education Department ... to train qualified special education teachers particularly for the secondary schools.

In this regard, it can be argued that access to tertiary education for students with disabilities is not an isolated event to be looked from one perspective. Contributing factors, including access to certain programmes which require Mathematics as the basis for admission, also reflect the students' experiences of support at lower levels of education.

6.2 CRITICAL AREAS FOR ATTENTION

This section presents views of participants on the kind of changes the institution can make to improve access to education for the students. They made suggestions for improvement which covered five broad areas. They wanted disability data to be used efficiently to plan support for the students. Proper use of disability data includes assessing the students' needs before they start their studies so that requisite resources are secured. Participants suggest that the teaching and learning environment at the institution must reflect diversity of students' needs so that access to curricula is enhanced. Additionally, the institutions' extracurricular activities must be organised to include the needs of students with disabilities so that their social and emotional needs are met. Finally, participants argued that for these suggestions to materialise, the institution must raise sufficient funds to improve its physical and human resources for learning.

6.2.1 Efficient Use of disability data

Evidence from this study has revealed that there is no system which ensures that students' needs are met though they disclose their disabilities to the university. They felt the need for the university to use the information to plan educational activities for the students. Participants suggested ways in which special education services can be organized such as informing all relevant stakeholders about the students' needs, being considerate when setting timetables and preparing teaching, learning and assessment material.

Two participants strongly felt that the university should process information they, as students with disabilities, provide about their impairments and needs so that the university plans to provide resources needed for their support. Keletso notes:

I think they should also consider reading the applications because most of the time I think they just check whether you qualify to be at the university. They don't look at the forms they give you because I'd like to understand they still don't do anything about it..

Keletso states:

There should be preparation prior student being admitted because we can't say it was a mistake or anything if the facilities are not prepared for me to write a test, to write an exam.... And I think they should also consider reading the applications because most of the time I think they just check whether you qualify to be at the university.

Other participants felt that it was critical to use the information for planning support activities for students with disabilities. The BA Lecturer suggests:

There should also be improvement on the side of the academic office/[department]. For example, if we register somebody or somebody applies and we admit that person, there should be communication particularly from academic office moving downwards to the departments: to DSA, to a person who sets timetable that [there are] ten disabled persons of this nature ... and all offices are expected to respond accordingly.

The BA lecturer emphasises that there should be compliance to support students with disabilities once staff has been informed about their needs. This narrative supports views reflected earlier that presence of a policy must influence protection of the rights of students with disabilities. Members of staff and students without disabilities alike should comply with its mandates or face repercussions.

Lerato indicates:

I think this one is about sharing the information. ... they have to consider [and] compare the timetables of those faculties that the child will be able to move to the class.

Having been victim of arriving late to classes when she swapped classes, Lerato suggests that setting timetable should address problem they as students with mobility challenges face resulting in their exclusion. In this regard, the BA lecturer also proposes adjustments to physical environment so that the students with mobility challenges should not be required to climb stairs.

He proposes:

... the timetable, it says such students should use only the ground floors, they cannot be using any other floor other than a ground floor or a classroom whereby they cannot have to climb stairs upwards.

The SW Lecturer 1 argued that more needed to be done to advocate for the rights of students with disabilities and prevent discrimination. He reflects:

During orientation when students come for the first time, this [advocacy for the students' rights and needs] should be an activity, alright, that should be included in an orientation programme. Some kind of conscientisation, some kind of awareness and at the same time it is not just about saying 'don't do this, don't do that' because they hold an expectation that the university should play its part in terms of ensuring that students with disabilities have easy access to facilities and services.

Inefficient use of disability data has been viewed as contributing immensely to poor access to curricula at the university. In this regard participants felt that proper use of disability data would influence planning for support activities such as setting timetable in buildings accessible to

mobility-challenged students, considering distance that mobility-challenged students travel between classes and preparing teaching resources ahead of time so as to include the needs of students with disabilities.

6.2.2 Identification of students' needs

All students with disabilities felt that restructuring education to be accessible to them should be a consultative effort which meant that the university staff must consult them in order to address their needs efficiently. Misconceptions arise if the university staff makes decisions without consulting the students. The following are examples of students' perceptions. Lerato recommends:

If they talk about how lecturers approach us I think there should be something like, they have to learn from us. The lecturers, they have to learn from us how we do things rather than learning from others how we do things because, truly you are not going to know me unless you learn from me who I am. I feel so bored when I take the pot and the lecturer says 'no leave it, leave it, someone will take it', yet I know I can take that pot.

She adds:

...all the communities here in the University including the SRC, I think we need to be included.

Raphael submits:

...every time there should be some information going to the disabled students so that things don't happen without their knowledge or for instance the simple one is that of closure of a door to the ramp and this one of policies which I'm not even aware if they are available.

Katleho proposes:

For me what I can say is that we need to involve people with disabilities in doing everything that affect them. This can help in identifying their needs; people should not just assume that once a person is visually impaired, they need braille.... Working with

organizations for the disabled can help a lot in getting challenges that people with disabilities encounter. That is why consultation with the disabled is important.

Lineo adds:

Lecturers need to reconsider how they approach students like myself. They should not think they know my need but should ask me what I need or want. Sometimes I sit in the second row in class and some lecturers tell me to leave my seat and go to the front when the seats are the same and I don't have visual problems.

Students' needs are unique to them and students who share the same type of disability may have different needs. Therefore, it is imperative for the university to devise means with which to periodically assess the needs of students with disabilities so as to enhance access to education for all.

6.2.3 Developing Access to Curriculum

In paving the way for better access to curriculum, the students felt that the university staff needed to know about their needs so that they could respond to them appropriately. One student speaks of participatory teaching and learning methodologies in which students contribute actively to lesson activities. A deaf student suggested ways in which she could be able to face both the lecturer and interpreter, because the informal arrangement of her classmate interpreting for her while sitting in the same row led her not to face the lecturer but the student interpreter. Lecturers should familiarise themselves with basic communication methods of the students such as sign language and braille. The university also needs to use information and communication technology as well as other media to deliver lessons. The use of modern technology is touted as suitable to enhance access to education for the students at this level of education. The following are some of their suggestions. Thabo opines:

Another instance that I'd like to see be more emphasised within the education sector is an idea of students' involvement in class because in some lectures it is like we're like old schooled in the sense that more of the talking is done by the lecturer whereby I'm of an impression that the lecturer should just give the basics.

He adds:

Let me say the teaching approach, it's obvious that if a teacher assumes that all us can catch his teaching methods, there's going to be a bit of imbalance in a sense that the most gifted, if a teacher surely is used to writing on the chalkboard and it is actually situated far away from the sitting position of the students, it is obvious that those with visual defects are going to be disadvantaged.

Thetso also suggests:

If the interpreter could sit there near the lecturer, and I could face the interpreter, the lecturer and board all at the same time. It could be much more easier for me.

She adds:

The lecturers should probably have the basic signs. They should probably learn the basic sign language because sometimes I have to communicate with them without the sign language interpreter's presence.

Three participants below speak of flexibility in providing study material and assessing students with disabilities. Access can be facilitated by providing information in alternative formats.

Katleho suggests:

Sometimes a person can have access to braille, but also be too slow in reading through braille.... I think there should be a question paper in soft copy instead of a braille one.

MIES Lecturer 1 States:

...we also need to make it such that all our material, learning material should include a duplicate of audio material in the case of visually impaired students. And for those who have hearing disability we should have a duplicate of print material. So we need to make our learning material inclusive.

Similarly, Thabo speaks:

I would like to see the education change in a sense that I'd like to move in the direction of having teaching materials being accessible in playable audiovisual materials.

Two members of staff indicate areas that need to be improved for teaching to be inclusive. That is, learning skills which enable staff to communicate with the students directly without an interpreter or access the students' work in its original format such as braille. Next, the university needs to employ technology which enhances methods of teaching and learning.

The MIES Lecturer 2 pronounces:

...we have to have trained personnel so that the institution can accommodate those visually impaired, we have to have someone with knowledge of braille.

The BA Lecturer suggests:

The university maybe can try to make sure that, they install projectors and make it policy that every lecture should be delivered in that mode because at least it is bright and the font size can be enlarged compared to my handwriting which normally some of us don't have that clear handwriting. And then from there also the microphones, the university has to make sure that every large class and define what a large class is, it should be taught using a microphone not a normal voice of the lecturer because that is a challenge too.

Perceptions about staff development largely focus on the teaching staff and their exclusionary teaching approaches. Staff also feels that they need training which could make them meet the needs of students with disabilities at their disposal. Training staff in basic media of communication, braille and sign language, would enable students to communicate directly with their lecturers. This can reduce distortion of information. One lecturer suggests that the institution needs to align itself with the use of modern technology to facilitate and enhance teaching and learning.

6.2.4 Enhancing participation in social activities

Students shared their experiences about what they want the institution to change. They note that they do have spare time which they would like to use for sports like their peers, only if there were facilities for sports which accommodated them. At times students note that they are addressed as a homogeneous group but students with disabilities have needs different from the rest of the student population. Therefore, students feel left out as noted in examples below. Raphael opines:

...like during our leisure time there is no, like sometimes we find ourselves idling. There`s no recreational services, there`s no such. At times you find that it would be nice if this time I have I could use for recreational purposes.

Motse states:

I also like sports a lot but one does not have access. Even if I wanted I`m not sure which sports I would take, so the university should offer us options for sport that fit us disabled people.

Thabo opines:

There should be some games that are specified for people with disabilities so that they can actually be part and parcel of society.

The Counsellor agrees:

There are no activities that bring people together.... So I think staff and students should be seen to be physically interacting beyond the classroom level such that togetherness is built so that when we make our goal, we should be understanding each other.

Since students felt that the university extracurricular activities were discriminatory, they suggested that the university should create access and avail options for students with disabilities to participate in various sporting codes. Participation in social activities was considered therapeutic for balancing out the students' university experiences and helping the university community develop mutual respect.

6.2.5 Mobilising resources for the students support

Participants felt that access would be created if the institution could increase and diversify its income generating mechanism to improve teaching and learning resources. Two participants think the resources that the institution has are not currently used to their capacity for support of students with disabilities. The resources include opening doors to overhead bridges to enable physical access to MBT that does not have ramps and creating easy access to available library material. One participant said the institution should be versatile in generating income that would be invested to improve its resources. Four participants felt that currently the teaching and learning material as well as infrastructural resources were inadequate and needed to be made accessible for individual needs. The Counsellor states;

Finance is a huge challenge for the country, it's a challenge for the university. It's a challenge for everyone else, it's because everything needs to be financed. So finance should be organized and that means the university itself should have a way of generating money on its own because currently we are suffering because we depend on the government for support.

The Social Welfare Officer concurs:

Yeah we need funds, the facilities are not sufficient especially for the disabled students, we have nothing at all.

In responding to how the institution can improve practices for access Karabo highlighted access to internet as one source of challenge for students who studied part-time. The institution did not have a functioning computer lab where they could access information through internet. Moving forward he found using the available but limited wireless internet as unreliable. He recounts:

Internet is a problem here; the wireless is only in certain places and is not reliable. You sometimes come and find that there's no internet reception. It mainly accessed in the reception area, imagine when all students have come for assignments, it would not be accessible and during the week we could also cause obstruction for people coming for services.

Katleho proposes:

The University should have a disability unit for every disability which is fully resourced, the disability unit(s) should conduct workshops for staff that works with students with disability at least once towards the end of an academic year.

SENA pronounces:

I think it would be of great importance to have resources, to have some sort of database, an electronic database of books, either electronic or brailled.

Norma declares:

Personally I suggest that there be personal guides provided

Lineo who struggles with access to furniture pronounces:

I would like to get facilities that are suitable for me to use for my studies.

Suggestions for enhancing support for students with mobility challenges indicated that the university could do more by maximising use of available resources. Students such as Raphael and Lerato have to climb stairs in buildings where an available but closed overhead bridge can relieve their challenges. Raphael states:

I'd, ok I love the PMC as it accommodates us but it's facilities are closed. ... there is a ramp I can use from PMC to access ok, like it links with MBT well. When I go to the first floor of MBT I could avoid the stairs and go via PMC. I would access MBT easily. Unlike now, MBT and PMC are linked but that bridge is closed and I would recommend it should open.

The 21st century university community would benefit from improved information and communication technology services. These services would help the students to download and access information in preferred media. The students' experience of tertiary education would be

enhanced by promoting independence of visually impaired and mobility-challenged students in accessing the university's physical resources.

6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It has been found that the institution has clear regulations stipulating candidates who qualify for admission into its programmes. Applicants with disabilities are not given preferential treatment which a minority group would get but compete for admissions spaces in the same manner as other applicants. Applicants who are blind are limited to programmes which do not require Mathematics as a prerequisite because such programmes have not transformed to accommodate students with visual impairments. Additionally, students have been moved between programmes to what lecturers thought were suitable or students had better chances of coping. One student was denied admission on the basis that she would not cope with lip-reading. The students are expected to cope instead of the university adapting programmes to be accessible to a diverse group of students. There is no communication between different university departments and units on how to use disability data. Data are not used for planning any support for the students; rather the students report their challenges to lecturers. When services are provided, they are reactive, delayed, uncoordinated. Sometimes the staff is uninformed on how to support the students efficiently. Students with disabilities encounter challenges such as being allocated a residence which does not meet their needs such as being required to draw water with a bucket while the student is physically impaired. They are required to attend classes in storeyed buildings when they have mobility challenges. The students have restricted access to curriculum as a result of poor teaching approaches, inadequate access to ICT resources including internet connectivity and inaccessible furniture for students with physical disabilities. It takes more time for a student with disabilities to study the same content as others because the students have to develop learning materials themselves; lecturers do not give study material in alternative formats. Some students also feel that special concessions they receive do not sufficiently address their needs.

There is limited academic and psychosocial support for students with disabilities leaving them to adapt to the pace of lessons, the way lecturers teach, and adapt to the physical make-up of the university landscape. The support service from the SENU is skewed towards visual impairments leaving students with other types of disabilities to struggle by themselves. The given support itself is insufficient because students with visual impairments do not get mobility training when

they first arrive at the university and struggle to access reading and reference materials such as books and journals. The library does not provide reading or reference material in braille. Social welfare officers, counsellors and tutors are entrusted to offer psychosocial and academic support to students enrolled at the university but each set of professionals is said to be under-resourced and overstretched to give efficient support. Tutors are inadequately trained to provide psychosocial support for the students. None of these professional services is targeted for students with disabilities, and treating the students similarly with the rest and without positive discrimination cannot address their barriers and unique needs.

This chapter also pointed at several factors that contributed towards exclusion of students with disabilities such as lack of awareness of a university policy on access to education for students with disabilities. The lack of clarity on policy influenced practices in which admitted students were required to cope without support. A consultancy for improving special education support services recommended that a policy be developed to describe the rights of students with disabilities. However, this has not transpired and the Faculty of Education seems to have failed on the mandate to support the students. The faculty seems to have downplayed the university management's mandate to expand support of students beyond visual impairments. Given reflections and opinions from students, lecturers and the consultants who developed the special education programme, and proposed development of a special education department, lack of resources and support at the lower levels of education curtails the potential of students with disabilities to pass well enough to qualify for tertiary education.

The shortfalls in how the university regulations were applied brought suggestions that a special education policy should be developed consultatively with all stakeholders such as students with disabilities, organisations for people with disabilities and the university staff. The policy must, for example, indicate which department is responsible to capturing disability data, how it should be disseminated and how key stakeholders must be informed about support for the students. The policy should also provide for repercussion associated with noncompliance and the policy must be reviewed periodically. Students with disabilities were critical in determining their barriers to access and how the challenges should be addressed. The university needed to raise sufficient income to improve human and infrastructural resources requisite for supporting the students which include training academic staff to diversify their teaching approaches. It was also argued

that while at the university the students' need for social engagement was as important as the need to study, because they complemented each other and both contributed towards a holistic human being.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter findings of the study are discussed. The chapter begins by describing the theoretical lenses that underpin the study, and will use these lenses for interpretation of the findings. The chapter discusses results on environmental accessibility, access to academic programmes, provision of academic and psychosocial support, the influence of institutional ideology on access and students' self-concept development as well as influence of policy on students' experiences.

7.1 THEORETICAL LENSES

The study adopted the social model and social constructionism as lenses to guide interpretation of data. Access from the social model is enabled by systemic change, while social constructionism advocates for change in the ideological perspectives about disability. From these perspectives access and participation of students with disabilities is hampered by exclusion of students from decisions that affect them (Claiborne et al. 2011), setting normality as a standard for accessing the physical environment, thus making it difficult for persons with disabilities to function (Finkelstein 1993), leading them to be dependent on others for their survival (Oliver 1993). These ideas of inequality are passed as acceptable knowledge by social institutions such as schools (Foucault 1982). Against these perspectives, the discussion of the findings is organised against eight dimensions of access used to present research findings.

7.2 DIMENSIONS OF ACCESS

This section discusses various ways of perceiving access to education for students with disabilities at the institution. Access is described as it applies to admission to the institution and to programmes. Discussion is made on handling disability data, environmental accessibility, access to curricula, provision of support services, availability of a disability policy, management inclusive practices and the role of access at lower levels of education.

7.2.1 Admission Processes

Discussion about admission are made from two points of view, namely, the way admission processes affect access to the institution and the extent to which qualifying students can pursue programmes they prefer.

7.2.1.1 Admission to the Institution

Admission processes reveal that access to the institution poses barriers for students with disabilities as admission is based on equality, fairness and merit. Admission criteria, as spelt out by regulations in the institutional calendar and explained by the admissions officer, promote equality and fairness. This is evident where disability data, though captured by admissions office, are not used for admission purposes because students with disabilities have to meet the minimum entry requirements and compete for available spaces with nondisabled counterparts. However, this study argues that students with disabilities are a minority group whose right to participate in HE must be protected by reserving a space for all qualifying students through a quota. As Odhiambo (2016) argues, merit principles are biased to the socially privileged in society. Therefore, similar to the institution's recognition that space for international students must be reserved (Institutional calendar 2006/2007), the same approach must be used to promote participation of students with disabilities at tertiary education. The treatment of persons with disabilities as a minority group with specific set of rights and privileges encapsulates the social constructionist perspective which advocates for positive discrimination to address their needs (Abberley 1987). Therefore, a separate criterion that promotes admission of qualifying students with disabilities would comply with the first inclusive education value, namely, promoting presence as stated by Humphrey (2008) and UNESCO (2005). It can also address concerns raised by CHE (2012:13) on low participation of persons with disabilities which is at 0.02% of the total number of all students enrolled at HE in Lesotho and 0.09% of the population of persons with disabilities eligible for higher education.

Higher education institutions need to make a major transformation to be responsive to the needs and rights of students with disabilities as a minority group (du Plooy & Zilindile 2014) to enhance accessibility. Therefore, admissions based on merit, as findings from the current study indicate, jeopardize participation of qualifying students with disabilities at higher education level. This study argues, as Leathwood (2005) does, that giving the same treatment to students with disabilities as we do nondisabled students is unfair. In describing access to tertiary education in Africa for all students, Odhiambo (2016) postulates that merit can be inherited depending on a person's background. Findings from another literature study by Akin (2012) state that social class bias leads students from middle class to have better access to HE as parents afford extra tuition to prepare them for tests and examination. Similarly, findings from this study

reflect the same possibility of class bias. For example, the two students with visual impairments were advantaged to change their secondary schools in Lesotho to study in South Africa where the secondary schools they attended supported them better. Another student who is also partially sighted did not go to South Africa but had to learn braille and re-do Forms A to C [grade 8 to 10]. If the three student participants' parents did not afford to change their schools, they would have probably abandoned their studies due to lack of support. Therefore, the use of merit in the admission process of the institution can lead to bias against a few students with disabilities who qualify for tertiary education.

7.2.1.2 Admission into programmes

Admission regulation AR2.05 stipulates further requirement for students who want to do B.Sc. and certain courses in the social sciences. However, results of the study reveal situations where some students with disabilities were denied access into programmes, not on the basis of failing to meet minimum requirements but on the basis of perceived students' capabilities by staff. For example, a swap of a student with cerebral palsy's programme from Mass Communication to Adult Education was not based on inability to meet entry requirements but the lecturer's perception that one programme was more suited than the other for the student. This violated the capability approach's principle of choice in which Wilson-Strydom (2011) argues that functionings should reflect people's desires. Additionally, one student was declared inadmissible in 2008 because it was argued she would not cope with reading lecturers' lip, thus showing ignorance about support needs of students with hearing impairments. The finding concurs with results of a study by Kioko and Makoelle (2014) conducted in the UK which states that lack of training in disability-specific knowledge for lecturers impedes support for students with disabilities. In another incident a change of programme was recommended because a student was gradually losing hearing ability instead of facilitating resources for support. The two incidents reflect that participation in the institution's programmes depends on physical ability to adapt to the teaching methods lecturers use, and also reflects the staff's narrow understanding of disability issues. The findings compare with those of Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) research conducted at two institutions in Lesotho, albeit for only blind students, which similarly found that lecturers at these institutions were not trained on disability issues. Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) study also found that blind students were not allowed access to programmes in the social sciences, which require skills such as reading of graphs, because the students did not do

Mathematics at high school. However, their study did not reflect experiences where students were denied admission on the basis of perceived weaknesses instead of lack of prerequisite subjects. Decisions such as swapping a students' programme instead of motivating for acquisition of the necessary resources show utter discrimination against the students. They also reflect society's devaluation of persons with disabilities which Hunt (1966) said must be challenged as unjust.

Correspondingly, the current study found that access into the institution's programmes was discriminatory, and it did not give the students the capability approach's value of choice (Terzi 2014). The findings concur with Skrtic's (1991) study in the USA which argues that students have to fit within existing standard programmes and failure to do so means the student is incapable. In speaking against ableism, Finkelstein (2001) postulates that our world is structured by normal people for normal people and prevailing practices exclude those deviating from the norm. However, this is against the principles espoused by the social model of disability which speaks against associating disability with weakness and lack of capability to do things (Shakespeare 2014). The institution should create an enabling environment to meet students' diverse needs (Lone & Kumar 2013) as education which does not accommodate student diversity perpetuates inequality (Read et al. 2003). To be accessible for all, the institution's programmes must be adapted and resources secured for students whose sensory or physical impairments make it hard for them to access education efficiently (Anastasiou & Kauffman 2013:442).

7.2.2 Handling of Disability Data

Once students with disabilities are admitted, details about their impairments and educational needs should be shared for efficient support. However, the study revealed that though disability data are said to be captured, they are never shared with faculties that admit the students to facilitate their teaching, the library, the special education needs unit or other departments that provide social support for students with disabilities such as department of student affairs. Nondisclosure of disability data negatively affected planning of academic and social activities for students with disabilities because findings show incidences where support was delayed, and was more of a reaction than a planned activity.

7.2.2.1 Effects on planning academic activities

Inefficient use of disability data negatively influenced the institution's opportunity to plan support for the students, thus, leading to several barriers which students had to overcome by themselves. One of the fundamental principles of the social model is creating access by addressing social barriers to learning (Shakespeare & Watson 2001). That is, when the students' social need such as allocation of appropriate accommodation is not met, the students would not pay attention in class and would doubt whether they should be studying at a HEI at all. Similarly, one student said she arrived late in most lectures attended in buildings far apart because the timetable was not planned to accommodate her as a mobility-challenged individual. This created undue dependency on others to explain and give her notes. On the same note, a deaf student had to depend on a classmate for sign language interpretation because poor planning led to delays in finding an interpreter. The experiences also elevated these students' differences as negative rather than part of human diversity which the Salamanca Statement says must be accommodated within institutions (UNESCO 1994). Affected students with mobility challenges had to cope and adapt to demands that were beyond their comfort (Jelas & Mohd.Ali 2014), and as Hadjidakou et al. (2010) might argue, while feeling excluded and insignificant. The findings on access challenges for students with physical impairment support CHE's (2012) report that one higher education institution failed to document this group as enrolled in it. Therefore, it would be difficult for the institution to plan support for students whose needs were not identified. The findings also compare with arguments of a survey by Murray et al. (2008) that inefficient use of disability data leads to exclusion. The institution later addressed two of the three challenges seemingly because they were informed of the students' discomfort. This supports the social constructionists' argument that normal people may not understand challenges of people living with disabilities (Zola 1979) unless persons with disabilities personally explain their problems and demand their rights to access (Hahn 1985). The shortfalls must be addressed by identifying the students' needs and considering these needs while planning the institutions' activities. This underscores proper use of disability data.

7.2.2.2 Effects on providing resources

Poor flow of information also affected allocation and use of resources at the institution as there was duplication of ICT facilities installed with JAWS at the SENU and the library. The question of where these resources must be placed attracts debates on discrimination and efficiency. It

seems discriminatory to argue that ICT resources must be in SENU because this replicates the special education route of separating education for students with disabilities and other students. However, currently there is no staff in the library readily available to support the students in locating books and scanning relevant pages for them to read through the software. The argument for better utilising the institutions' limited resources would be to increase the number of ICT resources at SENU because SENA is readily available to support the students, and unlike the library which opens at 08:30 a.m. and closes at 22:30 in the evening during the week, the students have keys to use ICT laboratory in SENU all day throughout the week. Additionally, sufficient number of ICT resources can help with the students' examinations and tests written in the lab. From the social constructionist perspective, the students are better positioned to describe how and where they want their education to be facilitated (UNESCO 1994; Claiborne et al. 2011), and in this regard, the students had no preference because ICT resources at SENU and the library were inadequate to support their needs.

7.2.3 Environmental Accessibility

The institution has built ramps to make some of its buildings such as the library and lecture halls accessible, but ramp doors to one lecture hall remain closed and some buildings are inaccessible despite students receiving essential services from departments located in the buildings. There is no mobility and orientation training for blind students with the result that they become dependent on other students.

7.2.3.1 Mobility challenges

The results of the study indicate that there is considerable effort to create physical accessibility by building ramps to lecture halls, the first floor of the library and an overhead bridge joining first floors of two adjacent lecture halls of which one does not have a ramp access. Despite these developments, evidence from students' experiences and pictures from the surroundings of the institution reveal that students encounter many practical challenges created by inaccessible built environment. These include insufficient lighting and lack of paving to make the environment accessible, and consequently one student could not use the library efficiently. The library is very important for every student as it is a quiet place for reading and making use of references. Difficulty of accessing the library can cause frustrations due to limited time to study in halls of residence which can be noisy as students engage in social activities. Additionally, not using the

library can result in poor academic performance if the student does not find appropriate reference material to write his assignments.

Apart from poor lighting at night and lack of paving, this study found that students with physical disabilities encountered challenges accessing lecture halls which had no ramp access. Students with mobility challenges were forced to climb stairs; a physically strenuous and time consuming activity while the same lecture hall could be accessible had the doors to the overhead bridges been opened. This reflects what seems to be ignorance on the part of the institution that there were students with mobility challenges who would benefit from using facilities such as the overhead bridge. The findings compare with results of CHE's (2012) research that the institution does not identify and support the needs of students with physical disabilities. The Special Education Needs Assistant as the only member of staff deployed to support students with disabilities also conceded that he only supported students with visual impairments. It was, therefore, evident that SENA would not advocate for the needs of students with mobility challenges because he did not know about them. He also limited his mandate to supporting students with visual impairment. This calls for students with disabilities to work together and speak about their challenges as a collective. From the social constructionist perspective, desired change would not come unless students with disabilities advocate for support of their needs (Abberley 1987). Though lack of access to buildings was found by CHE (2012) to be common in most HEIs in Lesotho, CHE (2012) did not discuss underutilization of existing resources which the current study argues is partly due to lack of advocacy by affected students with disabilities.

Therefore, it is critical for the institution to identify the needs of students with disabilities, and develop resources that ensure access to education for all students. Engelbretch and De Beer's (2014) assessment of physical accessibility in one South African University, similarly found that access to physically built environment was a common problem that restricted access to education of students with physical disabilities. Engelbretch and De Beer's (2014) research showed the following as places in which the students had major challenges: (a) access to the library constrained by narrow doors; (b) parking space designated for persons with mobility challenges being used by persons without disabilities. Conversely, in the current study participants and environmental assessment suggested that the library was accessible. Inaccessible places were the building in which both the bursary and academic departments were located, one of the largest

office building which also houses SENA, the clinic, and access to the first floor of MBT lecture hall because of closure of an overhead bridge.

These findings indicate that environmental accessibility is viewed from the principles of 'ableism' and 'normalism'. The proponents of the social model, Finkelstein (1993) and Hunt (1966) argue that normality is used as a measure for functioning in social environment; all must cope or else be considered weak and useless. According to social constructionism people with disabilities must challenge ideological assumptions that associate disability with weakness as these are discriminatory and not founded on objective truth (Manias & Street 2000). Foucault (1982) argues that people with disabilities must defy the identity society gives them; they should question whether they are individuals only worthy of sympathy of others or citizens with equal rights. The latter assertion means that they should point out injustices outright and fight for recognition of their right to access on an equitable manner. In this regard, Hahn (1982) argues that they must desist from being passive members of society and demonstrate their worth in social development initiatives. In the current study this implies students with disabilities should not expect people without disabilities to recognise their challenges and address them, but must actively advocate for transformations which incorporate their needs.

7.2.3.2 Lack of provision for mobility training

The results of the study reveal that two blind students enrolled at the institution encountered challenges accessing the physical environment because they were not offered mobility training. Lack of mobility training reduces affected students' level of independence, and can result in additional expenses to affected students (Hadjikakou et al. 2010). Depending on peers to guide them to class means that they could be late just because their peers are late. They may not easily manage time for their studies when they rely on others to escort them. Lack of mobility training led both students pay for escort services which meant additional expenses on the students' budget. In addition to lack of training, the environment did not have braille signs to guide blind students about names of lecture halls and rooms. This means that even if they had mobility training to access the physical environment, they would still depend on others to locate lecture halls. Additionally, blind students were aggrieved by lack of communication about potholes left by maintenance staff because they could easily sustain injuries by falling into them and miss time for studies as a result. In this regard, the institution falls short of facilitating access which

article 20 of the CRPD finds critical to enable persons with disabilities to have the necessary level of independence. Thus, the institution fails to meet minimal requirement for providing access as perceived by the social model of disability where students' rights to live independently, work and influence decisions are respected (Shakespeare 2013). Students with mobility challenges must be empowered to function independently so as to pursue their studies without restrictions.

7.2.4 Access to the Institutional Curricula

Access to curricula for students with disabilities is explained from how the teaching and learning practices of the institution allow the students to participate. Therefore, the discussion is on how students with disabilities experienced their learning given their impairments, and whether attention was paid to support their needs and stimulate success in their studies. The study has found that lectures are run on a competitive basis with minimal recognition and support for individual differences. The most common adaptation to the institutional curricula for students with visual and physical impairments was time concession.

7.2.4.1 Pacing of the lessons

Access to curriculum for all students with disabilities was not equitable as the study found that lectures at the institution were offered face-to-face using the pace that was too fast. Lectures were not paced to suit the needs of students with certain forms of disabilities such as students with cerebral palsy who were too slow when copying notes and the partially sighted who struggled to copy notes from the board which was cleaned before they could finish. Additionally, blind students found it difficult to follow the lectures because some lecturers did not fully describe concepts they demonstrated on the board. The students' experiences indicate that lecturers were oblivious of their needs, and lectures were conducted the way lecturers felt appropriate (Madriaga et al. 2011). In this regard, Grenier (2007) argues that the lectures were organised to meet certain cultural conformism to which HEIs subscribe. This also revealed that students did not have platform to express their needs and influence how they were taught. For example, the students felt it would be better if they had prescribed books so that they could read them to compensate what they missed or have notes accessible in alternative formats. Social constructionists such as Zola (1979) maintain that students should have a platform to express

these views so that lecturers can address their challenges and to improve access which requires lecturers to maximize student participation to reach their academic potential (Barton 2003).

Next, the institution did not have sufficient resources such as projectors for relatively large classes with the result that partially sighted students were forced to cope with lecturers' handwriting on the white board. The learning contexts required students to adapt. The style and tempo of the lectures as well as learning resources, as components of a curriculum, did not reflect inclusivity because the learning styles and needs of the students were not addressed Nkoane (2009). In this regard students with disabilities were expected to meet standards of practice set for everyone else (Skirtic 1991) or as Thurman and Fiorelli (1979) put it, they had to act normal. Access is denied when students are expected to acclimatise themselves to how lecturers conduct their lessons instead of lecturers accommodating their individual needs (UNESCO 2008).

Contrary to the argument that Dworkin (1981) makes about compensating for the students' challenges, lack of access to curricula and equity was demonstrated by failure of the institutional teaching and learning practices to address students' individual needs. The lessons lacked positive discrimination (Gewirtz 1998) which brings about equity. This indicates that teaching and learning environment fell short of the requirement of the National Disability and Rehabilitation policy which mandates institutions to implement the necessary accommodations in curricula delivery (Kingdom of Lesotho 2011). As a coping mechanism the students were left to catch up on content missed in lectures during uncoordinated discussions with friends. This left students with disabilities not empowered to study on their own, and also vulnerable to misinterpretation of the content. The students' needs could have been met by receiving the notes in alternative formats or getting supplementary reading materials. The findings of this study are comparable to the results of Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) research at one tertiary institution in Lesotho which indicated that lecturers who were not trained in curriculum differentiation did not accommodate the needs of students with disabilities in their lessons. Additionally, the current study also found that when students approached lecturers for support, very few were supportive while most were either indifferent or intolerant to their need for support. Similarly, Matlosa and Matobo (2007) and Cameron and Nunkoosing (2012) argue that lecturers' lack of awareness on disability issues and inadequate training on how to accommodate students with disabilities result in negative

attitudes against the students. To this end, the students were not afforded sufficient and equitable opportunities to succeed in their programmes (Salmi & Bassett 2014), thus making it harder for them to succeed in their studies than peers. The findings from this study compare with those from research elsewhere. For example, a literature study by Gelbar et al. (2015) about access to HE in the USA indicates that, despite presence of disability laws in that country, in the majority of HEIs access to tertiary education for the students faces problems that include rigid curricula and negative attitudes from staff. When lecturers are not trained to facilitate learning for students with disabilities, they are most unlikely to use flexible and equitable teaching and assessment mechanisms, and this was evident in how some students in the current study viewed their experiences of assessment as explained below.

7.2.4.2 Influence of technology and pedagogics on access

This study established interrelations between students' use of technology and the need for training of lecturers to utilise opportunities that technology offers for learning and to be aware of the students' needs. Students with disabilities bought equipment to record lecture proceedings but as lecturers had no training in identifying and addressing the students' needs the students remained excluded. For example, students' experiences reveal that the lecturers' voices were not projected sufficiently for recording them clearly, and the lecturers' movements added to challenges for recording. The SENU did not buy hardware for students with visual and physical impairments who needed to record lessons, and this may constitute discrimination because the equipment students with disabilities bought to do the same tasks as peers without disabilities, such as recording notes, was expensive. This finding shows that the institution fails to meet the mandate of the National Disability and Rehabilitation policy which requires that institutions should provide the students with appropriate technology for learning (Kingdom of Lesotho 2011).

In this regard students with disabilities need to be supported by the institution as a way of providing opportunities for learning and applying what Gewirtz (1998) calls positive discrimination for their disadvantage. The findings on students buying equipment for themselves was also highlighted by Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) study as an anomaly, but their study did not indicate a mismatch resulting from students' use of technology when lecturers were not trained to adapt their teaching approaches. This finding compares well with Howell's (2006)

argument that technology alone cannot address barriers to learning but support of teachers or lecturers who also apply innovative teaching and learning approaches. Lecturers need not plan generally for all students but consider how to incorporate individual needs of the students in the teaching, learning and assessment methods. In preparing for teaching students with visual challenges and those whose physical disabilities make it difficult to copy notes, giving handouts ahead of lessons could, for example, stimulate blind students to follow and participate in lessons as they would have interacted with the content and tried to conceptualise it ahead of the lesson. The study shows that there is inadequate transformation to enhance participation which the social model describes as inclusive education. According to Oliver (1993) education from the social model does not overlook the needs of students with disabilities but makes holistic transformation on environmental accessibility, training academic staff, and in this case, ensuring that the students' teaching and learning resources were made accessible for them at no extra cost. Thus, once the participation of students with disabilities in the institutional curricula seems restricted, it deprives them of quality education (Humphrey 2008), and falls short of diversity promoted by inclusive curricula (UNESCO 1994).

Finally, the findings suggest that exclusion from teaching-learning experiences left students with disabilities dependent. They learnt content they missed in class through discussions or copied notes from peers when outpaced in lectures, and blind students asked peers to read library books for them. When curriculum requires students to cope within the normal school setting (Jelas & Mohd.Ali 2014) access to education is denied. The practices left students with disabilities less empowered to study on their own and vulnerable to misinterpretation of the content. The findings are similar to research results from a cross country survey, conducted in four countries, namely, Denmark, Czech Republic, France and Norway, by Ebersold (2012) which indicated that pedagogic neglect leaves students with disabilities dependent on peers. Waetjen (2006) interprets access as working on the teaching and learning environment to stimulate meaningful social and academic opportunities for the students to learn. It should provide opportunities for individuals to participate equitably by improving resources that support their learning. Sufficient effort must be made to sensitise students and lecturers without disabilities that providing additional resources to persons with more needs does not amount to unfair advantage as results from Matlosa and Matobo (2007) indicated, but creates equity (Mullins & Preyde 2013). The latter is in line with

the social model of disability which argues that persons with disabilities must be empowered by facilitating resources that help them overcome their barriers and enhance their chances of living independently (Oliver 2004:21).

7.2.4.3 Inequitable special concessions

With regard to applying equity on learner assessment, this study found that the institution has an unwritten regulation on time concessions during tests and examinations for the students. However, the regulation was implemented arbitrarily leading to some students feeling disadvantaged. That is, some students were unhappy with special concessions because they were not based on their needs. For example, blind students wrote all their tests and examinations in the ICT lab and were invigilated by SENA because they used computers installed with JAWS to type their responses. Therefore, they could not write with other students as computers installed with JAWS were desktops that would be inconvenient to move around and, at the time of data collection, the computers had no headphones and could disturb other students. Conversely, students with mild visual disabilities wrote with other students because they used pen and paper to write tests and examinations.

In addition, the findings indicated lack of consistency in the application of the special concession. Two students, one living with cerebral palsy and another with nervous system disorder were allowed to write for an extra one and half hours for a three-hour examination. However, two blind students and students who were partially sighted were allowed only 30 minutes extra for a similar three-hour examination. The students with visual disabilities said the extended time was insufficient and did not meet their needs as they were not consulted in setting the time limits. A social constructionist perspective by Zola (1979) asserts that it is only the student who can genuinely explain barriers they experience, therefore, recommendations for time concessions from medical professionals should be applied in consultation with individual students about their needs. UNESCO (1994) as the founding international policy for inclusive education emphasises the right of students with disabilities to explain how their education should be transformed because students with the same condition may have different educational needs. In this regard, blind students received unequal treatment as the institution did not facilitate for the students to define their needs which research considers requisite for enabling access (See Claiborne et al. 2011).

The findings confirm Madriaga et al.'s (2011) point which suggests that students with disabilities studying at HE continue to be excluded by inflexible assessment practices. In their study, they found that the students are excluded in the following ways, lecturers and students without disabilities expect students with disabilities to adapt to standards meant for every student. Giving study material in alternative formats and applying special concessions in assessments is considered giving them unfair advantage. Nkoane (2006) suggests that assessment usually centres on teachers' rather than students' needs, and then restricting access to education. The discrepancy could have also been caused by the fact that the students who were allowed sufficient time concession studied part-time at MIES, an institute that runs part-time and distance learning programmes for the institution resulting in variations in how the policy is implemented. Assessment seemed to use the medical deficit model which Ashworth et al. (2010) describe as bias and unjust. From the social model, if blind students cannot meet the time set for the assessment while typing, as typing requires a separate set of skills, a scribe or audio-recording of responses can be used to diversify assessment methods. From the social constructionist perspective, reluctance from the institution to diversify its teaching and learning methods as well as assessment mechanisms reflects an expression of unspoken assumptions and ideologies about physical requirements for accessing formal education, thus, subjecting people with disabilities to feelings of inadequacy (Hahn 1985).

7.2.5 Support Services

This subsection discusses challenges to access that result from inadequate academic and psychosocial support from tutors, SENA, counsellors and social welfare officers. Tutors' academic support is administrative; they register students, computerise their results and issue the results in addition to their teaching responsibilities. It was also revealed that they are ill-equipped to provide counselling. The SENA mainly supports students with visual impairments while students with cerebral palsy, central nervous disorder, physical disabilities and so on remain without support. Additionally, though support was skewed towards students with visual impairments, the support was centralised at the institution's main campus, the students studying at the satellite campus were not supported. The Department of Student Affairs' support units – counselling and social welfare – are understaffed and the department does not extracurricular activities for students with disabilities, which result in exclusion of the students. Students with

disabilities were also aggrieved by inefficiency of nonacademic staff to respond to their call for repairs in halls of residence and the general environment.

7.2.5.1 Academic support Services

Academic support for all students is facilitated through tutors and the special education needs unit as an additional system of support for students with disabilities. However, the current functioning of the two structures does not enable access for all students with disabilities. First, tutorship is provided by lecturers at the institution, usually appointed for an additional responsibility and pay to be year-level tutors. Though tutors have to provide academic and psychosocial support the academic support is limited to administrative duties such as registering students and processing their results at year-level. It currently fails to address the students' academic challenges. It is not a form of tutorship which the students could use for extra tuition in courses they lag behind. If lecturers working as tutors were to intervene in subject specific support, they have to be tutors for programmes in their fields of specialisations and they also must have workload that allows time to address the students' individual challenges. Additionally, some tutors did not know much about the responsibilities of tutorship because it seemed they were not properly oriented, and their contracts did not outline the responsibilities either. On this note, all tutors said they could not meet the desired responsibilities because they were overloaded and ill-equipped for their tutorship responsibilities.

The findings compare with results of a literature study by Kochung (2011), reflecting Kenyan experiences, noting that lack of training negatively affects the quality of support to the students and undermines their access to education. Thus, support from lecturers working as tutors to the students should be accompanied by proper training on disability issues and training to empower them with counselling skills. The results are also comparable to those of a qualitative research conducted in the UK by Kioko and Makoelle (2014) which indicated that lecturers need disability-specific knowledge to provide appropriate support for the students. It is critical to note that assessing and addressing the needs of students with disabilities require additional training to that of counselling. Articles 24 and 26 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities put academic and psychosocial support as interdependent. Therefore, lecturers need training in disability-specific knowledge so that they become empathic to the students' conditions. Further, they should be trained to provide basic counselling above their skills in

diversifying teaching methodologies so that they could contribute to the holistic development of the students. As Humphrey (2008) explains, it would be difficult for students with disabilities to do well in their studies when rejected by fellow students and teachers at schools. Therefore, to facilitate cognitive, social and emotional development of every student, staff at the institution must address barriers to both the students' cognitive and social development.

On the other hand, support provided by the SENU was skewed towards visual impairments and left students with other disabilities without targeted support for their needs. For the students with visual impairments the SENU provided braille transcription, ICT laboratory to access information through JAWS and a place to write tests and examinations. Nevertheless, the services provided by the SENU were found deficient: (a) students with visual impairments usually did not know timeously about services the institution provided for them due to poor use of disability data referred to above, and the delayed support amounted to restricted access; (b) students and the SENA described existing computers installed with JAWS as obsolete and software outdated, and this also restricted their access to learning given that use of computers was their only means of access to written material. When the ICT lab is in a bad state of disrepair students with disabilities are denied access to information because JAWS provides their means to read notes or reading material turned into softcopy and to carry out research by using the computers installed with JAWS to search material in the internet independently; (c) there was no working relation between the SENU and the library to transcribe books in Braille or purchase them in e-text; therefore, students with visual impairments though supported were left without access to study and reference materials. The findings of this study which describe poorly serviced computers and limited access to internet are comparable to the findings from Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) study. The findings also point to weaknesses of the SENU as a support structure because the unit depended on services from other units and departments of the institution which, to this end, were not proactive and coordinated in addressing the challenges.

In line with Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) study, students with visual impairments studying at HE in Lesotho face different challenges from students with similar impairments elsewhere. For example, a survey by Tugli (2013) at one HEI in South Africa indicates that, students with visual impairments usually get study material transcribed in braille late, a claim that is supported by results of a qualitative study conducted by Mokiwa and Phasha (2012) for the same type of

disability in a different university in South Africa. This seems to be a common trend; support for students with disabilities at tertiary education seems to be dwindling as explained in the next paragraph. Unlike their sighted peers who used library books, journals and other reference materials, the current study reveals that blind students had restricted access to information, thus, making their learning much harder, and undermining their right to choose meaningful functionings advocated by the capability approach (Sen 1999). The challenges reflect Finkelstein's (1993) argument that normality is used as the basis for social participation, and as demonstrated in the current study, reading materials are readily available for sighted students only.

Furthermore, for the institution not to ensure proper functioning of the ICT laboratory for students with disabilities as a compensatory source of information, can be interpreted from the social constructionist model to indicate that HE is meant for sighted people (Hahn 1988). Ebersold's (2012) comparative analysis of surveys conducted in Denmark, Czech Republic, France and Norway, also suggests that universities and colleges exclude students with disabilities because they pay inadequate attention to pedagogical accessibility. The findings of this study compare with experiences of students with visual impairments in South Africa and one study from Lesotho cited in the preceding paragraph. Though there are noted variations in the students' challenges, teaching and learning practices at tertiary institutions seem not to meet basic equality principle of fairness where all have access to the same learning material; sighted students have access to library reading material but blind students do not. This also shows a difference between policy and practice because the institution declares that it is committed to support the needs of students with disabilities but the practice is contrary. This calls for the library in the institution to make reading material accessible for students with visual impairments so that it meets the minimum condition of equality.

Generally, given the results of the current study, there is a need to rethink how tutorship should be restructured to address support for students who may need tuition beyond participation in lectures. It is evident that the restructured tutorship system would have to address high students-tutor ratios and address a mismatch between tutors' expertise and students' programme. For example, academic support could be given by senior students to their juniors with the SENU coordinating and monitoring the tutorship exercise. Although support services need to be

mainstreamed alongside other institutional services to reflect inclusiveness, the findings of this study suggest that a strengthened SENU is important to coordinate disability support right from admission, dissemination of disability data, profiling each student's participation and facilitating progress through their studies. The findings compare with Kayhan, et al.'s (2015) qualitative study which argues that there should be an independent disability unit with an independent budget dedicated to support the students because when there is no such department, disability support is pushed to the periphery and becomes secondary to institutional mandate.

7.2.5.2 Psychosocial support

This subsection discusses challenges resulting from inadequate psychosocial support due to lack of focused counselling services for the students, inability of tutors to do counselling because of work overload, lack of counselling skills and lack of coordination of counselling services. The section also discusses students with disabilities' perceived inefficiency of nonacademic staff to respond to their call for repairs in halls of residences and the general environment. The institution also lacked extracurricular activities for students with disabilities; this reflects exclusion from the privileges other students enjoyed.

7.2.5.2.1 Emotional support

The findings from the study reveal that some of the students with disabilities were exposed to challenges which required counselling. For example, two students with disabilities were exposed to bullying and discrimination but did not make use of counselling services because of ignorance of how counselling could help them alleviate their challenges. Findings of the study compare with those of Ebersold (2012) who found that universities and colleges paid less attention to how unattended social and psychological problems could interact negatively to influence academic participation. The fact that the victims did not use available services can be interpreted in many ways; one reason could be ignorance about counselling services or their importance in their challenges as there were no services targeted for them. From the social constructionist perspective the students could have accepted the negative comments about them as not worth fighting against because physical impairments are associated with limitations and being less human (Hahn 1983:37). As the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNSECO 1960) states, discriminatory attitudes deny the students equal opportunity; institutions blame them for their challenges and make no initiative to address their needs for physical or curricula accessibility (Hahn 1983). Ultimately, the students get used to being ignored or being subject of

discriminatory attacks; and as Goffman (1963) contends, they ultimately develop low self-esteem. The students did not receive any targeted counselling services even after the Department of Students Affairs announced that there were discriminatory incidences against them. The blind student who committed suicide was not under suicide watch, and was also not receiving counselling at the time despite the depressive symptoms known by the department.

All students deserve to get access to psychosocial support because their emotional health has a bearing on whether or not they can focus their energy on their studies. Salmi and Bassett (2014) suggest that psychosocial support is one of many practices that help students with disabilities overcome their social and natural disadvantages. That is, counselling helps them cope with challenges brought by their impairments (Oliver 2004). In particular, students with disabilities in this study needed counselling as a result of various challenges they encountered: (a) problems for students with physical disabilities included inaccessible physically built environment leading to late arrivals in class, climbing stairs with difficulty, ramp doors closed without justification or consultation with the students. These experiences exposed their weaknesses resulting from impairments and could easily damage their self-worth. Additionally, it is this group that suffered verbal bullying from peers without disabilities with hurtful comments made about them while they listened. (b) Blind students had to depend on peers for direction around campus, for reading library material, and escort to town and in the process their self-worth was negatively affected because there were no enablers for them to be independent. Similarly, students who are partially sighted had to keep up with lecturers' pace in writing notes or tests on the board and negotiate retake of tests and access to notes in alternative formats. (c) There was no sign language interpreter for a deaf student and this made her to depend on a fellow student for accessing lecture proceedings, socially communicating with peers and in doing assigned group tasks. This made the student vulnerable because the student interpreter was not obliged to give her sign language services.

Therefore, students with disabilities were exposed to many barriers to access which warranted the need for counselling services. However, it was revealed that the counselling unit was understaffed and not in a position to give targeted services for the students while tutors, on the other hand, did not have requisite skills to provide counselling. Therefore, lack of counselling skills for tutors coupled with high work-load for all counselling staff restrained access and led to

a student committing suicide, another abandoning her studies while others suffered in silence. These findings are in line with results from a survey by Ebersold (2012), which indicates that under-resourcing of psychosocial support staff at tertiary institutions leave the students vulnerable and, thus, negatively affecting their participation in education. Articles 24 and 26 of CRPD advocate for improved psychosocial wellbeing if students' holistic development and, in the current study, equitable access to tertiary education experience is to be achieved.

In line with the social model's idea of access initiatives as proactive (Gibson 2012), the counsellor made workshops to empower leaders of various student formations at the institution with life skills. However, she conceded that leaders or representatives of students with disabilities were not represented in these trainings. From social constructionism the exclusion is not accidental and amounts to ideology which considers life with a disability as insignificant. The indifference to the students' needs by the institution's community and ridicule from peers must be met with resistance which Foucault (1982) argues, people with disability must refute how society perceives them. In addition, when providing support services, the students' needs cannot be served when treated like everyone else; according to social constructionism, they must be channeled through what Hahn (1985) calls a minority group identity meant to promote their rights. The key issue here is not accessing the services like others, but striving for equity because people with disabilities in this study seem to face more challenges to access than their peers, therefore, they are more prone to psychosocial challenges such as depression.

7.2.5.2.2 Welfare support

The findings of the study reveal several key challenges that compromised the welfare of students with disabilities. These include, lack of participation in sports, poor maintenance of halls of residence and the general physical environment. For example, there was no sporting code adapted for students with disabilities despite the institution organising sport activities for able-bodied students who even competed against students in other universities. Similar to their peers, participation in extracurricular activities gives students an opportunity for social networking and can help them build teamwork. It is part of the experience all students need from the institution for social development and to unwind from academic workload. Denying students with disability participation in sports reflects an assumption that disability leads to life that is insignificant and not worthy to enjoy what the general population does (Finkelstein 2001). Liggett (1988) points

out that society has narratives about people with disabilities that are not representative of how the people think and feel about themselves. The findings of the study indicated that the students were interested in participating in sports with one competing nationally as a paralympian but facilities of the institution denied him development of these skills. The social neglect evident in sports is similar to neglect the institution showed in their studies and, on both occasions, the students did their best to survive by themselves without challenging the oppressive practices. However, it could be argued that neglect experienced by the students socially or academically should be considered discriminatory.

Furthermore, the students complained about delays in repairing malfunctioning equipment of a hall of residence they used, or covering holes dug around campus. The restructuring of resources to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities is a feature that Westwood (2007) thinks is central to inclusive education; however, students with disabilities in this study were clumped together in one residence without the necessary rehabilitation of the building. For example, preference for using a shower instead of a bathtub was not met for one student. Additionally, all the students used one bathroom and toilet irrespective of gender differences. To this end the students' right to privacy was greatly undermined. In another case a mobility-challenged student was allocated a residence without running water though seen using crutches. This study also argues that giving the students the hall where they live by themselves reveals that the institution functions from the medical model where an imperative for social restructuring is removed (Dyson 1999). The isolation can contribute to incidences of discrimination which the students reported as prevalent because able-bodied students do not have social interaction with the students with disabilities except only occasionally. The social constructionism describes unspoken rules of engagement in society which render people with a stigma as less human (Goffman 1963). Therefore, it is not surprising that the institution expects students with disabilities to share the same bathroom and toilet; it is an expectation not extended to able-bodied students in their residences.

7.2.6 Disability Policy

The findings of the study reflect a mixture of perceptions about existence and effectiveness of a disability policy. The institution has regulations that describe admission as nondiscriminatory and some participants suggested that admission was based on equality. Additionally, information

booklet given to new applicants by the institution describes institutional commitment to address the needs of students with disabilities. However, a consultant employed by the institution to develop a special education department recommended that disability policy be developed.

7.2.6.1 Perceptions on existing institutional policy

Although existing regulations provide for nondiscrimination from many viewpoints including on the basis of disability, and advocate for equality in access and treatment of all, these regulations were not met in many instances. The following two realities indicate discriminatory treatment of students with disability: first is the lack of access to the library textbooks and reading material for blind students; second, students with physical challenges had problems accessing certain built environments. In addition, an incident of discrimination was reported by the Department of Students Affairs and confirmed by students who were victims of the humiliation but there were no repercussions suffered by perpetrators. Therefore, there is no guidance on how behaviour considered discriminatory should be dealt with so that such the punishment can act as deterrent for staff and students against such practices. Furthermore, a student claims she was denied admission on the basis of her hearing impairment while others were told to swap programmes of choice for others on the basis of perceived weaknesses resulting from their impairments. These count as evidence of violating the regulation on nondiscrimination without proper action taken to protect students with disabilities.

The clear violation of a policy could be understood within a context of ignorance of the policy because participants' perceptions of a disability policy were speculative suggestions based on observed practices within the institution. Students with disabilities felt that if there was a policy there seemed to be lack of understanding of their problems; they were not satisfied by the lack of action to relieve them of their challenges. Some thought that the policy might just be available but not implemented. The findings from this study compare with results of a study conducted by UNESCO (1997) about HE institutional policies in South Africa, namely, that institutions do not have a clear disability policy and require the students to adjust to the norms of institutions. Another study in South Africa by the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) (2011) concluded that HEIs in the country could not sufficiently address access, retention and participation of students with disabilities without institutional disability policies. On the other hand, the violation of the policy from the social model and social

constructionism perspectives reflect assumptions that all must function within a similar context to qualify and participate in HE. People's social practices and preferences are informed by public policy (Walker 2003; Barnes 2013). It is these social practices that social constructionists such as Hahn (1988) see as reflecting values and assumptions of physical attributes people should have to function in a given context. Therefore, lack of action to support the needs of students with disabilities despite the regulations shows that they are expected to cope.

7.2.6.2 Suggestions on policy changes

Institutions must have their own policies despite operating within a strong national policy framework to describe how they would advocate for and protect the rights of students with disabilities. Research studies on how a national policy reflects on institutional practices show that unless institutions domesticate a national policy, practices at institutional level do not reflect support for students with disabilities. For example, the results of a survey by Madriaga et al. (2010) indicate that though tertiary institutions in the UK operated within a strong national policy framework one institution studied had not adopted it resulting in several challenges for student with disabilities. Similarly, a qualitative study by Opini (2012) conducted in Kenya found that despite sound National policies in that country, females with disabilities suffered double discrimination, based on gender and impairment, which limited their access to HE. A literature study by Ndlovu and Walton (2016) on access to HE in South Africa also indicates that the good policy context has not yielded tangible benefits for students with disabilities studying at tertiary level.

Additionally, a study using a mixed method approach by Engelbrecht and De Beer (2014) observed challenges with physical access to a tertiary institution in South Africa despite the Education White Paper 6 mandating all tertiary institutions to be accessible for mobility-challenged individuals (Department of Education 2001). Given challenges that students with disabilities faced despite a functional national policy, it is important to suggest how the institution studied should develop its policy. As participants explained, an inclusive education policy envisaged for the institution should clearly spell out what students with disabilities are entitled to. The policy needs to spell out in unequivocal terms specific processes and actions that would promote access. For example, Persons with Disabilities Bill of the Republic of Kenya (2015), in expressing the right to education states that, institutions must pronounce themselves

on how entry requirements, school facilities, class schedules should be diversified for creating access. It also mandates institutions to show how individual support and necessary equipment would be provided for support of the students. In this regard, the institutional inclusion policy should promote admission into the institution by: (a) setting aside a quota for all qualifying students with disabilities in line with existing regulations that promote presence of certain groups of students. This would bring equity and address challenges resulting in students competing for admission spaces in the same way as others; (b) making use of disability data to fill the quota thus, addressing the poor handling of disability data; (c) establishing an institutional assessment mechanisms to authenticate the students' disability data and subsequently identify their needs in time to plan support. It can also be argued that an efficient policy clearly describes processes of identification, assessment and accommodation and indicate how the responsibilities for support would be shared.

Persons with Disabilities Bill of the Republic of Kenya (2015) also advocates for provision of individualized support. An institutional disability policy would have to explain how the mandate for academic support would be met. The findings revealed that the dual role of academic and counselling support done by tutors at the institution rendered both services inefficient. The policy should separate academic and psychosocial support currently bestowed on lecturers working as tutors. Additionally, academic support should stimulate participation and progression of students encountering challenges with their studies. Thus, the institution could consider regulating student to student academic support and providing incentives for students who would work as academic tutors. Further, the policy should describe how counselling for students with disabilities should be improved with better and well qualified staff complement in the counselling unit. The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law (Republic of Cyprus 1999) recommend employment of auxiliary staff such as psychologists, speech therapists etc. in public schools supporting the students. It remains with the institutional policy to describe how such professionals would work with other staff to enhance support for students with disabilities. A recommendation to employ a psychologist and a speech therapist in the SENU at the institution under study was also made by the consultant engaged to improve the special education programme.

An institutional policy should describe the students' right to access resources equitably. National policies reviewed expect institutions to make facilities such as buildings and equipment used for enhancing teaching accessible. In this regard, a policy should explain how these resources would be secured for the students' use during their studies at the institution. Purchasing hardware for use by the students is supported by the National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy which recommends supply of appropriate technology for learning (Kingdom of Lesotho 2011). Furthermore, the policy should mandate the institution to create opportunities for social participation by developing facilities that enable the students to engage in extracurricular activities according to their interests. In this connection, an institutional policy should describe how its practices are shaped. From the social model and social constructionist perspectives people with disabilities should define how their needs should be met (Zola 1979). Thus, students with disabilities must be empowered to explain how they want their education experience to be structured (UNSECO 1994), and to raise awareness of their needs without feeling ashamed or less deserving of social participation (Hahn 1982). As Claiborne et al. (2011) postulate, any improvement on social practice should be informed by removal of barriers that persons with disabilities experience in their education. Therefore, development of the institutional policy must be made in consultation with students with disabilities, organisations for persons with disabilities, civil society and participation of the institutions' community at large.

7.2.7 Management of Inclusive Education

It was revealed that the institution does not have a functioning structure which coordinates identification, assessment of students' needs and their support. There is only one person employed to support students with visual disabilities in exclusion of other disabilities, even though in 2005 the institution mandated the Faculty of Education to expand disability support services beyond just one type. The findings of the study depict SENA's perception of his duties as support for students with visual impairments but he also facilitated support for a deaf student. The support is limited to supporting students who presented themselves to the SENU because of poor handling of disability data.

Equitable access is negatively affected by lack of development of the Special Education Needs Unit since its inception. The recommendations to increase staff complement at the unit have not been adhered to. The results indicate that there is lack of coordination of disability data and

sustained leadership on disability to support issues. The critical question for debate is whether or not there is need for a special education needs unit while advocating for inclusive education. Given the findings of this study there has been limited progress in implementing recommendations of a consultancy on reform of the special education services despite mandate given to a Faculty of the institution. The Special Education Needs Unit is an isolated unit in the Faculty such that its services are hardly known to members of the Faculty approximately 8 years after suggested improvement was approved. Only one position remains in SENU as opposed to seven additional positions suggested by the consultant. The institution goes about its business undeterred neglecting the needs of students with disabilities. To this end, it seems proper to suggest that, in as much as disability support services need to be mainstreamed within departments of the institution, there should be a fully resourced department to take a leadership role in disability-related issues, and sensitise the institution on how to facilitate access over time. Establishment of a functioning disability unit is promoted by research elsewhere because mainstream services require a push from a unit dedicated to issues of disability considering prevailing misconceptions and a long history of marginalisation of disability in higher education. However, it is important to note that change does not come easily (Fullan 2006). For example, Ebersold (2012) argues that the students with high support needs are poorly supported at HE in Norway due to under-resourced disability support units. A study conducted by Hadjidakou et al. (2010) in Cyprus found that the students' needs were not met when receiving services designed for all students without a unit coordinating their support. Similarly, Kochung (2011), in citing experiences of Kenya, found that when institutions do not employ auxiliary staff such as braille transcribers and sign language interpreters to support the students, their needs get marginalised and their access to education gets constrained.

Inclusive education speaks about enhancing resources for learning. The institution in which the study was conducted needs to improve, among others, ramps to make the built environment accessible, create disability awareness to staff and nondisabled students and employ professionals that would give academic and psychosocial interventions to enhance participation of students with disabilities. Advocates for the social model such as Oliver (2004) recognize that impairments bring with them physical and emotional fragility. Therefore, transformation does not rule out continued need for individually focused interventions where required; hence

recommendation for the SENU to have a full staff complement in different areas of disability to help assess challenges, coordinate and provide required staff training for disability support within the institution. Maintaining a separate unit that manages disability support issues promotes what Abberley (1987) calls a minority group rights agenda which may be neglected if not advocated for and protected. However, maintaining a separate unit of disability may conflict with advocates of radical inclusion who maintain that inclusive education feeds into an inclusive society agenda and, therefore, the idea of strengthening services provided by SENU promotes exclusion (Thomas, Walker & Webb 1998). In the current study it was found that the institution already has regulations on nondiscrimination meant for all students, but they have not yet promoted the rights of the students. Similarly, the general staff of the institution fail to create access for the students, albeit without training.

The need for a separate unit coordinating disability support issues can be viewed positively within the social constructionism model which argues that oppression of people with disabilities is sustained by ideological perceptions about disability (Hahn 1983). In this regard, the defeatist ideology on disability cannot be corrected within a short period of time for persons with disabilities who have been socialized to accept it (Goffman 1963) and 'normal' people and institutions that mistakenly promote the ideology as objective reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966). The SENU must operate as a disability leadership unit driving the access agenda throughout the institution by sensitizing management, staff and students alike. The fully resourced SENU would help address planning for support services as the study found that available support initiatives are at most delayed and reactive. The findings on the negative effects of poor leadership on access compare with results of a qualitative study by Shelile and Hlalele (2014), though conducted at primary education level in Lesotho, which stated that access at that level was restrained by lack of quality leadership.

7.2.8 Influence of Access at Lower Levels of Study

The findings indicate that access to tertiary education for students with disabilities is constrained by low number of students who achieve results that make them qualify for entry into tertiary institutions. The main reason seems to be lack of support for students with disabilities to participate effectively and succeed at primary and secondary levels. Two consultants engaged by the sampled institution to develop a special education department found that there was high

attrition of students with disabilities at lower levels of education leading to low participation at HEIs. Given the scenario, it becomes critically important that tertiary institutions in Lesotho make it their mandate to identify and admit all qualifying candidates with disabilities. However, the findings of the study indicate that the students compete with applicants without disabilities as admission is on the basis of merit. Some participants also noted challenges they encountered while studying at secondary school level which demonstrate lack of support for students with disabilities at lower levels of education in Lesotho. Another factor that was notable in all the participants' success was that socioeconomic background plays a huge role for academic development of students with disabilities. The parents were in a position to move their children from schools that were ill-prepared to support them to schools resourced to do so.

Furthermore, secondary curriculum for blind students exposes them to prejudice because it does not include mathematics. Therefore, their applications to tertiary institutions are restricted to programmes where the content does not deal with reading graphs. This limits the students' capabilities which Sen (1999) argues are enhanced by the ability to choose programmes one desires. People apply great effort and achieve better when they do what they like. This implies that access to tertiary education can be affected by the extent to which the students' participation and success are enhanced at lower levels of education. These findings compare well with results from Mwaipopo et al.'s (2011) study conducted in Tanzania which indicated that participation rate for people with disabilities at tertiary institutions is negatively affected by a low number of students who participate and achieve at primary and secondary levels of education. Among the reasons Mwaipopo et al. (2011) note are high dropout rates caused by inadequate financial and human resources to facilitate inclusive education. A number of studies on access to primary and secondary schools support the view that students with disabilities are not supported effectively at these levels to qualify for HE. For example, a study by SINTEF (2011) reports that in Lesotho only 60% children with disabilities aged 5 to 10 years attend school with the figure slightly lower for students aged 11-20 years. There is poor retention of those that attend due to poor supply of teaching and learning resources such as stationery and classrooms and teachers leading to overcrowded classes where students' individual needs may not be identified and met (Moloi et al. 2008). Teachers are also not adequately trained to diversify their teaching, and to support learners with disabilities (Mateusi et al. 2014:267).

7.3 INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES, IDEOLOGY AND STUDENT'S SELF-CONCEPT

The study demonstrates that the needs of students with disabilities were not met by existing institutional resources owing to inaccessible buildings, lack of paving for students with mobility challenges, inaccessible reading material for blind students, delay in employing a sign language interpreter for a deaf student and exclusion in extracurricular activities. A critical issue this section addresses is how these barriers influenced the students' self-concept within HE.

7.3.1 Reflections on Students challenges

A student living with cerebral palsy wondered why the institution's buildings were inaccessible for people with mobility challenges like him. His comments were based on his observation of discriminatory overtones in the institutional practices. Another student with dwarfism and kyphosis conditions noted that classroom furniture was uncomfortable for her to use; either she had to stand to use a desk or she sits so as to write on her lap. Similarly, a student with physical disabilities complained about the expectation to use laboratory chairs for some classes which posed challenges for her type of impairment. Two blind students indicated that they were not given orientation about the physical environment when they first came to the institution. There are no pavements to walk on and so they bumped against obstacles alongside the way leading to their residences. The students' problems were neglected so they were forced to comply with what the majority did. The findings concur with Liggett's (1988) argument that social services are biased towards people who hold power in society; these infringe on the right for persons with disabilities, and the barriers impinge on what Shakespeare (2013) describes as the right of people with disabilities to live independently, work and influence decisions that affect them. From the social constructionist perspective it is justified for the students to question existing exclusionary resources as unacceptable. Therefore, they should challenge existing ideology and practices, and demand change in the public policy which is discriminatory (Hahn 1988).

Students with disabilities endure the ableism attitudes (Lalvani & Broderick 2013) where they are expected to climb stairs like the rest of the students, and blind students have to struggle to understand visual demonstrations on the board and make their notes without receiving learning material in alternative formats. This is as if the reality describes physical qualities of persons worthy to pursue tertiary education. The results of this study compare with Skrtic's (1991) argument that students with disabilities must meet requirements for standard programmes and

follow standard lectures. If the students struggle, this is considered evidence that they do not qualify to pursue HEIs programmes. The results of the study are similar to the findings of Grenier's (2007) study which state that HEIs have cultural conformism which results in reluctance to change their programmes. The uncaring attitude from lecturers, according to Madriaga et al. (2011), promotes normalcy disguised as fairness. The observed lack of orientation, academically and socially, towards disability support in the institution endorses ideology that associates disability with weakness and poor life outcomes (Wendell 1996), and makes students with disabilities feel less important (Goffman 1963). Institutional practices served to discredit students with disabilities as weak and unworthy of studying at the institution (Bronner & Kellner 1989).

Generally, the consequences of the institution's rigid operations affected the students differently. Some students felt that they had to fight for their place in the HE sector and identify themselves as survivors (Morina 2015); One thought it was better to remain anonymous to avoid discrimination associated with disability (Riddell & Weedon, 2014). Others such as Karabo felt that the university was justified for not investing in sport facilities for them as only a few students with disabilities attended the institution. The findings compare with Vlachou and Papananou (2015) study which states that people with disabilities unwittingly accept discriminatory attitudes though this acceptance is socially disempowering. For example, one student tried to convince his lecturers that his visual impairment was not too severe for them to support; another said she had learned how to use the tall laboratory chairs for her daily classes and the other said asking for support frequently was like seeking special attention. The institution's practice of excluding students with disabilities admitted in its programmes demonstrated what Bronner and Kellner (1989) see as an effort to discredit the competencies of students with disabilities and uphold tertiary education as reserved for the select few (Reay 1998).

7.3.2 Reflections on students' self-concept

The students' experiences demonstrated that institutional ideology does not support diversity as reflected by barriers encountered by students with disabilities. It could be argued that the only unit dedicated for students with visual disabilities ought to be better resourced to alleviate the institutions' lack of learning material in alternative formats. Students with visual disabilities also

complained about lack of internet and obsolete software in the SENU. For some students this was an inevitable reality; they hardly opposed the oppressive practices of the institution such as lack of books in braille or e-text. According to Abberley (1987) unless people living with disabilities promote life with disabilities as worth living, their needs will be ignored because, as Zola (1979) argues, individuals without disabilities can never properly perceive challenges people living with disabilities encounter. In another incidence, students with mobility challenges had never challenged the institution to open doors to overhead bridge connecting two lecture halls. The institution could not facilitate access to available resources, and similarly the students did not claim their right to access the resources. The students' attitudes were pessimistic and reflected conformity instead assertiveness and demand for their rights to be met. The students' passiveness unwittingly promoted normality to be used as the basis for structuring the environment (Finkelstein 1993). Critical theorists and social constructionists perceive these as challenges of institutionalised knowledge production which is discriminatory against people with disabilities (Wendell 1996:61; Liggett 1988:265). Students with disability must oppose these anomalies as unjust and seek to rewrite their perception of how persons with disabilities must be understood, and accommodated (Foucault 1982; Hahn 1985).

7.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has deliberated on critical findings of the study presented in Chapters Six. The findings point out that access to education for students with disabilities is constrained and in some cases denied. The areas that need critical attention include admission criteria and processes that currently do not promote the principle of equity to influence high participation of the students. Apart from relaxing admission criteria for the students, disability data needs to be used for planning support because failure to do so exposes them to many barriers that compromise opportunities for success in their studies. For admission into programmes for which they qualify, access can be created by training academic staff on disability issues so that the students' applications would not be denied on the basis of perceived student capabilities. Once admitted the students have to deal with institutional physical resources such buildings and furniture that are not accessible, and students who need initial guidance to adapt to the physical environment are not given training. Though all aspects of the university life are important, access to academic curriculum is core to tertiary education experience, but currently lessons are not diversified, learning resources are not provided despite students' request. Given the students' experiences,

they have to acclimatise, adapt and catch up, and these are activities indicative of the medical model of disability where failure is blamed on students, while the institutional structures, physical, curriculum and attitudes remain rigid. Additionally, assessment methods are based on presumed standard time, and the time is applied inconsistently without taking students' needs into account.

The students are greatly affected by these barriers and while some feel they have to fight for their right to access others begin to embrace these discriminatory practices as though justified. The Department of Student Affairs can play a pivotal role in sensitising the institutional community against discrimination and providing counselling which the students so much need. However, its welfare and counselling units are understaffed and do not have any service dedicated specifically for these students. Policy plays a pivotal role in outlining what rights the students have and how the rights would be realised in the social practices of the institution. An inclusive education policy could outline how the students' needs would be assessed, lessons diversified, assessment measures applied and their entire tertiary education experience supported for their holistic development that would enable them to become productive citizens following completion of their studies.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter a summary of the key findings of the study are presented. The summary has eight subsections, namely, admission to the university and its programmes, handling of disability data, environmental accessibility, access to curricula, academic and social support, management of disability support services and influence of a disability policy. The chapter then provides conclusions drawn from the results, and makes a judgment about the findings and contribution of the study. Then, recommendations are drawn from the findings for further research, to influence practice and to develop an efficient disability policy. Lastly, limitations of the study are highlighted.

8.1 SUMMARY

8.1.1 Admission to the university

The university regulations reserve 10% admission space for Mature Age Entry Scheme and 20% for non-local students. Admission is considered non-discriminatory and is on merit, while reservation for non-locals is for an economic purpose. All students compete equally for available spaces and the identity of students with disabilities is considered irrelevant to disclose during selection of applicants. There were contradictions noted in the staff's perceptions of the fairness of the admission processes at the institution. The admission processes were generally thought as fair because all who qualify can apply. However, if a student with disabilities competes with students who did not get the same barriers to learning at primary and secondary levels, competing with these peers may be argued to be unfair.

8.1.2. Admission to university programmes

In order to access the university programmes one must meet a minimum entry requirement for the institution which is a pass with 1st or 2nd class from a high school leaving qualification. However, certain programmes require credits in Mathematics and Science-related subjects for admission and this requirement is a huge barrier for blind students who do not take Mathematics at high school. Additionally, it seems leadership in other programmes could also imprudently deny admission to blind students. That is, students were admitted into, moved from or denied access to programmes based on staff perceptions rather than consideration of students' needs.

8.1.3. Handling of disability data

Although students are required to disclose their disability on the application forms, it seemed information on disability was not used to inform lecturers and other staff about the students' needs, and to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are identified by chance by SENA. The institution's tendency to withhold information about disability brings about several challenges which undermine the chances for students with disabilities to access higher education. These challenges include: (a) inability to secure appropriate services for accommodation in halls of residence; (b) unsuitable timetable for students with mobility challenges for consecutive lectures in buildings far apart or requirement for the students to climb stairs.

8.1.4 Environmental accessibility

Efforts to modify environment for students with disabilities were observed where the institution had built ramps to create access to lecture halls and the library. Challenges were also noted which undermine full access to other, equally useful, buildings. For example, there were no signs to guide students to the ramps which were usually furthest away from ordinary access points. In addition, there were buildings of the university which were not accessible for students with physical disabilities, but the students were expected to receive essential services from them. The buildings included, the university clinic, a building in which bursary and academic departments were located, toilets in FTE lecture hall, office of the Special Education Needs Assistant and PAO building. Additionally, a lecture hall that could be accessed through overhead bridges was inaccessible due to closure of doors leading to the bridges. Furniture in lecture halls was also not suitable for students with physical disabilities. Finally, students with visual impairments met challenges as result of inadequate paving along the university routes and multiple holes left uncovered during maintenance of the university facilities.

8.1.5 Access to Curricula

The students' experiences indicated academic neglect because individual students struggled to cope with learning contexts which did not meet their individual needs. Access to curriculum for students with disabilities was inadequate and the students' efforts alone, such as buying hardware to facilitate learning, were not sufficient to enable access to lectures. Recording lessons other than having notes in alternative formats gave challenges to access as lecturers did not adapt their teaching approaches to accommodate the students' needs. Thus, it seemed each student could

benefit from getting notes in alternative formats. Various challenges to which lack of disability data exposed students are explained below.

As a result of ignorance of students' needs, lecturers demonstrated and wrote notes on the white boards excluding blind and partially sighted students; they did not explain sufficiently for students with visual impairments to follow the lessons demonstrated on the board. For example, one lecturer admitted that she had a blind student in her class but did not remember facilitating access to course material, tests and examinations. Students with visual impairments [partial sight] also felt disadvantaged as they wrote tests in ordinary lecture halls with nondisabled peers. Lecturers in that context usually failed to bring question papers in appropriate font and in some instances test questions were written on the board providing further challenges for access. A special concession which most students with disabilities benefited from was time extension. Students with partial sightedness say they did not benefit from time extensions while writing tests with their peers without disabilities. Similarly, blind students felt that time extended for tests and examinations was limited and these special concessions were inadequate. Conversely, two students with physical disabilities studying at MIES were happy with additional time allowed for tests and examinations. It seemed that the special concession was ill-coordinated and likely to be unfair to some students.

In classroom contexts, all students with disabilities felt outpaced by lecture presentations. Correspondingly, the students revealed that some lecturers did not entertain questions about previous lessons from which they sought clarity. One critical challenge to achieve the desired changes seemed dependent on staff attitudes; few were supportive, some indifferent and others intolerant. A partially sighted student stated that in one context a lecturer set a different question paper to the one he failed to write; another read questions to him after writing them on the board, while in another incident a lecturer never fulfilled a promise to give another test. Students with disabilities viewed provision of support as indication of good attitude and support: receiving notes from lecturers and having the notes, tests and examinations in appropriate format. Special concessions were also viewed positively by students as a sign of positive attitude from their lecturers, not a matter of principle, university policy or fulfillment of their right to education. Lecturers were similarly viewed positively for creating time for students' consultation. Additionally, one lecturer indicated that she made a student with physical disabilities

comfortable by finding suitable chairs for her to use in class. However, certain incidents of positive behaviour from lecturers could suggest that the concerned members of staff undermined the students' potential to execute desired behaviour independently.

Students felt that they were encouraged to find their own means to survive without support. One lecturer believed it was difficult to address the needs of students with disabilities while taught alongside students without disabilities. Students with visual impairments struggled to have access to learning and reference material; they had to ask peers to find books and read for them. The dependence on peers brought challenges to blind students during the time their friends were also studying. Students with disabilities also depended on discussions with classmates to fill the gaps in their notes; however, they also felt that discussions came a little too late in their studies. Some students felt that notes or explanations from peers were not sufficient and could not substitute those of a lecturer. Students also depended on their peers for non-academic services such as orientation and mobility as well as sign language interpretation services.

8.1.6 Academic and Social Support

The study found that students with disabilities ought to receive academic and social support from the SENA, student counsellors, lecturers working as tutors and social welfare officers. It seemed that SENA's support services were meant for students with visual disabilities only. Students with disabilities other than visual impairments did not have a professional assigned for their support. The counsellors and social welfare officers did not have focused services for students with disabilities; and lecturers, working as tutors, were to provide additional psychosocial support to all students. However, tutors similarly did not have specific services for students with disabilities.

Special Education Needs Assistant provided three types of academic support for the visually impaired, namely, braille transcription, invigilation of tests and examinations, and assistance with information search for students' research. The SENA also managed an ICT laboratory used for students with visual impairments. The key challenge for academic support of students with visual disabilities was that the ICT laboratory had outdated computers and the students also claimed that the software installed in the computers was obsolete. Internet was also thought as unreliable irrespective of where a student received it. The students had to use their personal computer to access internet in the ICT laboratories while plans were made to rehabilitate their

laboratory. This finding showed critical challenges faced by blind students as the library did not provide learning material in alternative formats. The students depended entirely on internet connectivity to access information in order to write assignments.

The study revealed that academic support offered by tutors for students was administrative such as registering students and processing their results. Tutors ought to provide counselling for all students assigned to them but none seemed to be doing it. They complained about large numbers of students which make it difficult for them to identify students with disabilities. For example, a tutor in the Faculty of Social Sciences was responsible for as many as two thousand students per year in 16 programmes. The task seemed insurmountable given that he did not teach in most of the programmes and hardly interacted with the students besides signing their registration forms. Equally important, though tutors were expected to provide counselling they had no training in counselling. Tutors understood their roles differently because they were not properly oriented to their tutorship jobs. Lastly, responsibilities for programme coordinators, equivalent for tutorship at the institution's satellite campus, running part-time programmes, were broader as they drew timetable for lectures, gave course material for courses they did not teach. This made them eliminate provision of counselling services as their core mandate. The view that tutors should provide counselling in addition to the services provided by DSA staff seemed justified because the institution's dealing with psychosocial support was understaffed. Counsellors were overworked and could not effectively facilitate individual sessions with large student population.

Participation in social activities such as sports was also a challenge. It seemed that though the university students engage in various extracurricular activities such as soccer, netball, volleyball, basketball, athletics etc. students with disabilities could only participate as spectators because there were no resources to enable their participation. Members of staff claimed that the university did have sports activities that accommodated students with disabilities. Further, the student counsellor conceded that she also excluded them from social skills training workshops she ran. Some students with disabilities felt that since they were few in number, exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities was justified. Allocation of residence was also characterized by exclusion. For example, the students were not satisfied with their hall of residence; it had one bathroom and one toilet to be used by both male and female students with disabilities but staff from the Department of Student Affairs perceived it as suitable.

Discrimination and bullying by peers without disabilities were reported despite warnings by the DSA. Some of the students were called strange names and their worth, as equally capable people, was devalued. They were also recipients of unpleasant remarks which were made in their presence. Their ability to participate in sports is often questioned and not welcomed. Staff participants felt that the university needed to do more than put a notice about the discriminatory behaviour if access for all was to be achieved. It was argued that management ought to consider providing requisite resources if students' well-being was to be safeguarded.

8.1.7 Influences of disability policies

The study found that the university has regulations on non-discrimination in admitting students. The institution's Order of 1992 upholds the principle of non-discrimination on admission while information shared by the institution in its brochure also describes its commitment to respond to the needs of students with disabilities enrolled. An education consultant engaged by the institution to develop a special education department thought that there was a policy vacuum and recommended that the institution must develop a disability policy outlining the rights of students with disabilities. Almost ten years since the recommendation, participants stated that they were not aware of an inclusive education policy as practices were discriminatory. Some participants felt that certain practices such as requesting students to disclose their disability statuses suggested a form of policy. Therefore, participants wanted the policy not only to be developed but also to be publicized and implemented. They felt that a policy should clearly indicate the rights of people with disabilities and what services students should be entitled to and, as the Counsellor notes, a policy should influence practices despite leadership changes.

8.1.8 Management of disability support services

The results of the study revealed challenges in the way support services were organised and managed. It seemed that Special Education Needs Unit was isolated from activities of the Faculty of Education though it was the host faculty. Additionally, the unit's activities were hardly known by lecturers in the host faculty. Although lecturers saw students with disabilities around, there was minimal effort to inquire about their support, especially when a lecturer believed the students were in a different faculty. There was not effort by the institution to make staff aware of the services provided by SENA. The study also revealed that communication about students with disabilities enrolled in various programmes was insufficient and that lecturers discovered the students while programmes were already underway. There was no

interaction, on disability issues, between all university departments dealing with students, namely; the academic departments, DSA, library and the SENU. The Special Education Needs Assistant, though dedicated to supporting education for students with visual impairments, had not worked with the library staff on mechanism of creating access to the library materials. He transcribed material such as notes provided by students or occasionally provided by their lecturers. The librarian similarly knew that SENU had ICT resources but understood little about the services offered by the unit to the extent that the library duplicated the services. Equally, the DSA was making plans to enhance resources on disability support but the department had not interacted with SENU sufficiently to know how it operated and to learn about its services. Lack of communication between units of the university was observed by participants not directly engaged with the units concerned and could result in excess resources due to duplication.

The provision of special education needs support services remained poor despite the university senior management requesting the Faculty of Education to improve them. Although the process to develop a special education department was developed and approved by the university management, the impetus to improve the services seemed to decline with changes in leadership at different levels. The Faculty of Education does not take proactive role on disability matters. Since the placement of special education under the Department of Educational Foundations communication about developing a department of special education stopped and students with disabilities were left to survive by themselves, without support.

Inefficient coordination of support services resulted in ill-informed decisions made by the Faculty leadership. For example, a blind student did not get support to learn for a period of about six months in which he did not receive notes and other study material in braille. During that same period he did not write tests. He wrote to the Dean-FED making her aware that he would miss four of first semester examinations, and requested that his problem be addressed in the best way possible. Documented evidence suggests that the Dean only acted after receipt of the student communication by writing to the bursar to hasten procurement of the needed computer. Consequently, the examinations for the student were rescheduled for the second semester albeit with a huge inconvenience as he had to miss classes, and at times write a test on the same day as the one scheduled for the examination.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions for this study are drawn in line with the objectives that guided the entire thesis and discussion of research findings. Since the first two objectives reflect practices and/or policies that create opportunities or challenges for access, conclusions drawn on the two will also reflect how the practices can be improved. Therefore, there will be no conclusion for the third objective which sought to suggest ways in which practices and policies may be improved to facilitate access to higher education for students with disabilities.

8.2.1 First objective of the study

The first objective of the study was to explore and describe practices and policies in place to facilitate access to higher education for students with disability in Lesotho. This study concludes that:

1. Employment of a special education needs assistant in 1999 was positive development which enabled access to education for students with visual impairments. However, keeping focus on one disability for more than 16 years in exclusion of students with other types of disabilities is discriminatory.
2. The responsibilities that SENA performs for students with visual disabilities seem limited. Students with visual disabilities had more educational needs than were satisfied; they did not receive books in braille or e-text, they did not receive mobility training, they individually reported their needs to lecturers. When the students said they asked friends to find books and read for them in the library, it seemed the role of SENA to help with research was not sufficient. If all these needs have to be addressed within the special education needs support framework, one SENA position would be inadequate. Additionally, as the aforementioned students' needs are not currently served by the university, this study concludes that the students' participation in their studies is limited and, therefore, access to curriculum constrained.
3. The institution's management, in 2005, made positive development of suggesting expansion of special education needs support services beyond the services for students with visual impairments. However, there has been no follow up on implementation of the consultants' recommendations which were approved by Senate in March 2009. It can be concluded that the needs of students with disabilities, as a minority at the institution, are ignored and they remain underserved. The lack of leadership of special education needs

services resulting from delays in the development of special education department has negatively affected appropriate use of disability data for planning support and sensitising staff and students alike. The support for students with disabilities remains weak despite senior management of the institution wishing them to improve. It seems Higher Education Policy of 2013, which mandates HEIs to create access for the students, has not influenced any positive development either.

4. The institution has since made other developments such as building ramps to the first floor of the library, and ramps have been built to access lecture halls, some toilets and offices. However, evidence suggests that there is lack of proper coordination of special education needs support services which deny students with mobility challenges access to existing resources of the institution meant to enable mobility. The institution may not increase access to remaining inaccessible buildings when, as the current study concludes, the identity and needs of students with mobility challenges is ignored and the students are not supported to access available resources.
5. The special education needs unit had three computers installed with JAWS at the time of data collection and two of them were connected to internet. Internet connection has been increased from one (Matlosa & Matobo 2005) to two computers connected with Local Area Network in 10 years. This indicates that progress to improve access to information for students with visual disabilities studying at the institution is slow and at times ineffective because during data collection the computers were obsolete. This is in addition to lack of progress by the institution's library, since Matlosa and Matobo's (2005) findings, to transcribe books into braille or enable access in alternative formats. Though students with visual impairments receive support there are limitations, such as not being given mobility training, no effort to transcribe books and other study material in braille and inadequate allocation of time to their tests and examinations, which curtail their participation on an equal basis with peers without disabilities.
6. The university does not have an inclusive/special education policy but current regulations of the university on nondiscrimination, though not enforced, reflect the institution's positive attitude towards difference.

8.2.2 Second objective of the study

The second objective of the study reads: Describe challenges experienced by students with disabilities studying at higher education institutions in Lesotho. For this objective this study concludes that:

1. The practice of admitting students with visual disabilities only in programmes in which Mathematics is not prerequisite is discriminatory. As Skrtic (1991) argues, programmes remain rigid and students are made to fit existing programmes or risk being blamed as not qualifying. This perspective is influenced by the medical model. Access to education is constrained if the students are only admitted where they can fit existing teaching styles and assessment methods.
2. The university practice of providing special concessions of additional time, to students with disabilities, for tests and examinations seemed flawed and ill-managed. There was no justification for the differences between addition of 30 minutes for some and 1½ hours for others while they were all taking a three hour examination. Students' needs are not assessed and have not been addressed sufficiently by current provision of support.
3. Lecturers use inflexible and biased teaching approaches; teaching and learning processes in some classes required students to cope with high speed in processing information and taking notes. Despite requests from students with disabilities for lecture notes in alternative formats, some lecturers failed to provide learning material for them. This minimises the students' participation in their studies and reduces access.
4. The university's psychosocial support services are inadequate. Two student counsellors and two social welfare officers employed to support a student population of about 10 thousand students appears a tall order if the university wants the students to access such services equitably. The use of lecturers working as tutors to give psychosocial support is ineffective for a number of reasons such as lecturers appointed as tutors were not trained in counselling skills, and they failed to identify students in need of support because of high tutor: student ratios. Some students were oblivious of tutorship services and responsibilities because lecturers were appointed to tutor students in programmes which they did not teach. There is a closed link between psychosocial wellbeing and students' academic achievement; therefore, without adequate psychosocial support provided by qualified staff, the students' academic participation would be compromised.

5. Students with disabilities were denied holistic university experience because they were excluded by lack of infrastructure to participate in sports. However, much exclusion may have resulted from the university's inability to document the students' needs because one student desired to play darts and another balling. Such sports codes, especially the former, were not costly to provide for students. Lack of participation in extracurricular activities denies the students many skills they need for social and academic involvement.
6. The prevalent exclusion, in majority of the university's social and academic activities, of students with disabilities reflects negatively on the students' self-concept. The students are left no choice but to be like and do things as majority do. Convergence rather than diversity is promoted by current practices at the university.
7. The prevailing practices of exclusion are promoted by, among other things, two issues. First, the ideology of normalism and ableism pervades the institution's culture making it oblivious of individual differences. Second, students with disabilities are complacent with institutional practices; they fail to challenge them and promote their right to equitable access.

8.3 LIMITATIONS

The current study used one institution as case study out of 13 tertiary institutions in Lesotho and its findings may not be generalised beyond experiences of this single institution. Additionally, as a study which used qualitative approach, its findings may not be generalised to reflect experiences of the institutions' population either. In particular, lack of data on students with disabilities enrolled at the institution and the subsequent use of snowballing to identify some student participants means that there may be some students with disabilities who were not included but could have given additional or divergent data to the one presented in this study. Though 11 students were identified, the exact number of students with disabilities enrolled at the institution remains unknown and their experiences were not captured. The study also reviewed documents which reflected challenges related to management of disabilities services but did not include staff at different levels of the institution's management which could have provided different perspectives to the ones provided by documentation.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for this study are drawn for implementing three areas of focus, namely, research, practice and policy.

8.4.1 Recommendations for Further Research

1. There is need for research that should investigate why management does not play an active role in promoting recognition of the needs of students with disabilities.
2. There should be a study which, using a representative sample of staff and students without disabilities and students with disabilities, must describe views on special education support and how the services should be structured.
3. There is need for a longitudinal study to examine the opportunities and challenges encountered by students with disabilities throughout their tertiary education. The study should also assess how they compare with their peers without disabilities.
4. This study recommends further research into how courses such as Mathematics, Economics and Statistics could be made accessible for blind students in Lesotho. This would require a comparative investigation of practices at tertiary institutions outside the country where the students get support to study the courses.
5. There is need to conduct research on family characteristic of students who survive challenges at tertiary institutions without necessary support.

8.4.2 Recommendations for Improving Practice

1. The SENU services must be managed better: information about prospective students with disabilities must be sought, support needs determined and services planned by a task team commissioned by the institution prior to the students' beginning of an academic year.
 - a. The students' needs must be considered when setting timetable to accommodate students with mobility challenges.
 - b. The closed overhead bridges must be accessible for students use.
 - c. Advocacy for the students' rights to access must be made part of an annual orientation programme for new students at the university.
 - d. The students' needs and required services must influence staff training needs and initiatives.
 - e. Students with visual impairments who need mobility training must be provided such training at no extra cost to themselves.
 - f. There should be better communication with SENU staff about barriers such as potholes which may cause danger to students with disabilities.

2. Lecturers should be mandated to share their notes and study materials in alternative formats to accommodate students with various types of disabilities that encounter barriers following lessons or copying notes.
3. Special concessions should not be generalised but must be designed to address students' individual needs.
4. Education in the 21st century has transformed to incorporate many technological innovations which facilitate teaching and learning. Therefore, investment in technology that enhances teaching such as projectors, sound management systems and smart boards will not help students with disabilities alone but can transform the learning context of the institution as a whole.
5. The institution should revisit recommendations made for developing a special education department by consultancy report of 2008 and decide how the recommendations can be implemented or revised.
6. Along with the recommendations made in the consultancy report, cited in 5 above, the institution should qualitatively and quantitatively improve its human resources across different professional cadres required for disability support, counsellors, social welfare officers and SENU staff, to increase efficiency of support services.
7. The institution should take serious measures against individuals who breach its anti-discriminatory regulations, so that students with disabilities get equal protection of the law.
8. Tutorship services should be reoriented from psychosocial focus to academic tutorship. That is, students who struggle with their studies should be tutored by senior students in the same programme as the one experiencing academic challenges. Student to student tutorship could be accessible to many students.
9. The institutions should diversify its sports codes to include games accessible for students with disabilities and should include their games in sports competition against students with disabilities from other institutions.
10. Students with disabilities must advocate their rights and share experiences of barriers they meet. Unless students with disabilities challenge existing practices at the institution as unequal and biased, the university staff and students without disabilities will remain indifferent.

8.4.3 Recommendations for Policy Development

In line with the mandate of the higher education policy:

1. The university must develop a special education policy which explains the following:
 - a. Explain what the university would recognise as a special education need;
 - b. Name the office/unit and/or officer(s) responsible to process the students' application;
 - c. Describe the way students with special education needs should be identified or assessed, including documents needed to validate the need;
 - d. Describe what special education needs support services would be and who should provide such support services.
2. To enable participation at HE for students with disabilities, the policy must explain how admission of qualifying students with disabilities should be handled.
3. The policy must explain how the special education needs support services should be funded.
4. The policy should explain processes which students with disabilities must follow to report exclusion.
5. It should also explain how non-compliance to the policy would be dealt with by law.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

1. What influenced your choice of this institution/university over others offering the same programmes in South Africa/Lesotho?
2. How accessible is the university for students with challenges similar to yours?
3. What practices are in place to facilitate access to education for students with disabilities?
4. What policies are in to facilitate access to education for students with disabilities?
5. How can current policies and practices be improved to facilitate access for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STAFF

1. How accessible are different university programmes for students with visual/hearing/physical disabilities?
2. What practices are in place to facilitate access to education for students with visual/hearing/physical disabilities?
3. What policies are in place to facilitate access for students with visual/hearing/physical disabilities?
4. How can current policies and practices be improved to enhance access to education for students with visual/hearing/physical disabilities?

APPENDIX III

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (STUDENTS)

1. What do you think influences students with disabilities to study at this university over other tertiary institutions?
2. How accessible is education for students with disabilities at this university?
3. What practices are in place to facilitate access to education for students with disabilities at this university?
4. What policies are in place to facilitate access to education for students with disabilities at this university?
5. How can current policies and practices be improved to enhance access to education for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX IV



Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

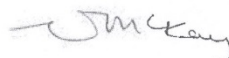
This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

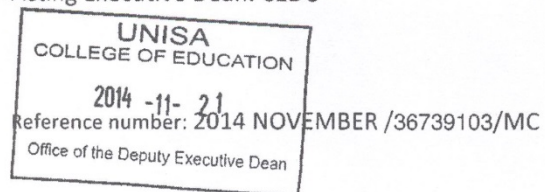
PA Mosia [36739103]

for a DEd study entitled

**Access and support for students with disabilities at Higher Education
Institutions: A qualitative comparative study of the universities in South Africa
and Lesotho**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two
years from the date of issue.


Prof VI McKay
Acting Executive Dean: CEDU




Dr M Claassens
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

17 NOVEMBER 2014

APPENDIX V

7th April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Permission to conduct research at your Institution

I, Paseka Andrew Mosia, am doing research with Nareadi Phasha, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education at the University of South Africa, towards a Doctor of Education. We request participation of the university staff and students to in a study entitled *Access and Support for students with disabilities at Higher Education Institutions: A comparative study of the universities in South Africa and Lesotho*.

The aim of the study is to to investigate how students with disability experience their education at your institution. _____ has been selected because it is one of the oldest Higher Education Institutions in Lesotho and has, until recently, _____ in the Country.

The study requests participation of fifteen employees and fifteen students with disabilities, who would be purposively selected. Student participants will be identified with assistance of relevant departments concerned with admitting, assessing and supporting students with disabilities. The following criteria will be followed for identifying student participants: a. Students should be 18 years or above; b. He/she should be registered in any field of study, graduate or postgraduate; C. He/she should have visual, hearing or physical disability and D. He/she should be willing to participate in the study. There is no gender preference in selection criterion, and therefore both male and female students will be encouraged to participate. Target staff participants include staff members who teach and/or provide academic support to students with visual, hearing and

APPENDIX V

physical disabilities. Staff participants will be purposively selected and participation will also be influenced by: a. Interest in partaking in the study; b. Relevance of their service to students with disabilities; and c. Interest in disability issues. Student participants in three disability categories (visual, hearing and physical) will take part in focus group interviews (five or more students per group) lasting about two hours each while staff participants will engage in individual interviews lasting about one hour each. Request is also sought for taking pictures of buildings and the campus environment to verify access for students with mobility impairments.

The benefits of this study include helping the university staff reflect on their responsibility in teaching and/or supporting students with disabilities. Students with disabilities will also share their experiences of education and support at this university. Such data will go a long way in enhancing the university service for students with disabilities and developing alternative support mechanisms for students with disabilities if the current are found to be deficient. The researcher thinks the study poses no foreseeable risks for all participants involved.

Findings from the study will be made available in the form of a seminar; the researcher will inform your institution once the study is completed so that you may choose time convenient for the seminar.

Attached please find a copy of a written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

Yours sincerely



Paseka Andrew Mosia

Doctor of Education student at UNISA

APPENDIX VI

11th May 2015

REF: REG/ADM-1.37
LML/hyml

Mr. P. Mosia

Dear Sir

Re: Request to research at the

The _____ is in receipt of your application to do a research at this institution.

After careful consideration of all relevant facts, the University has agreed to allow you to continue with your research as requested. It is hoped that the research outcome will be beneficial to both the institution of Higher learning and the country at large.

Wishing you well in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX VII

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had it explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have been assured that I will receive a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Name & Surname of participant (print)

Name & Surname of researcher

PASEKA ANDREW MOSIA

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

Date:

Date:

Names of Witness in Full (In case a student is blind):

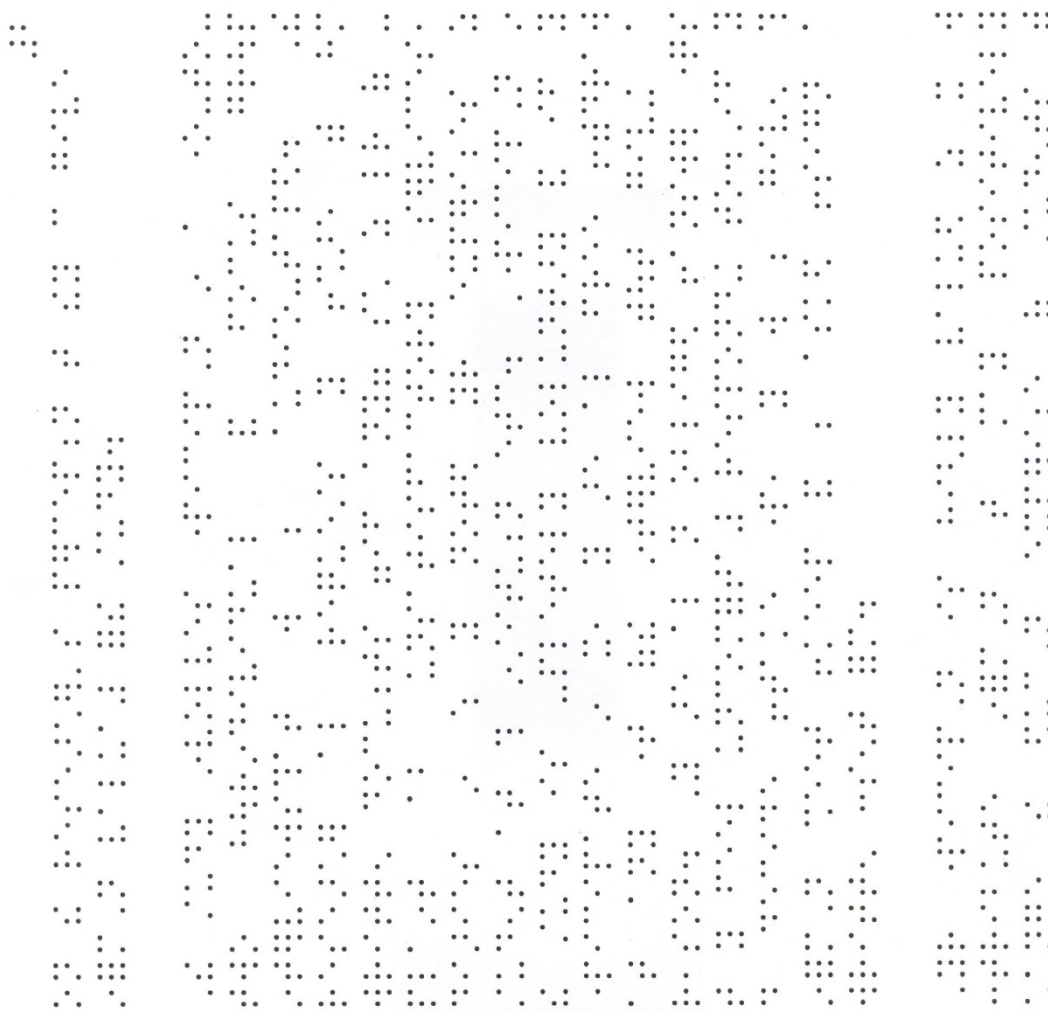
Signature:

Date:

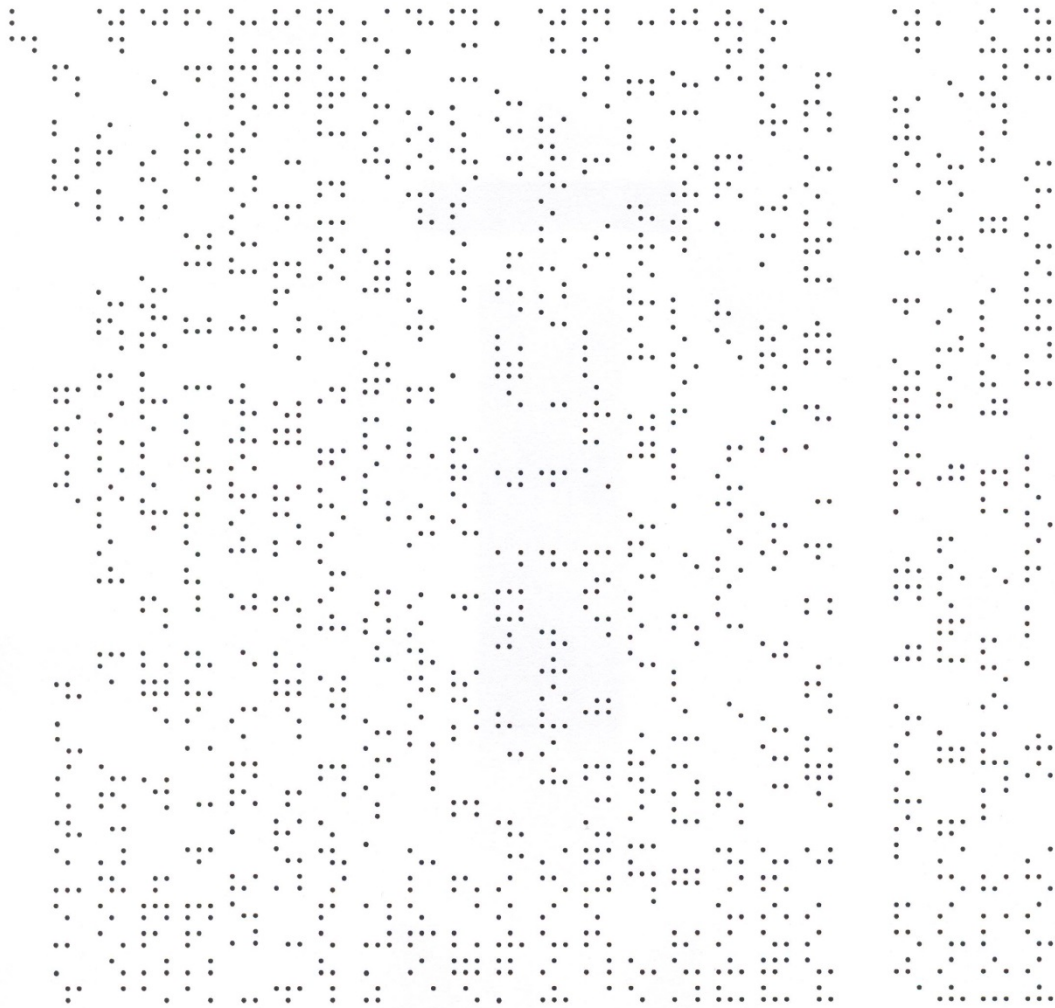
APPENDIX VIII



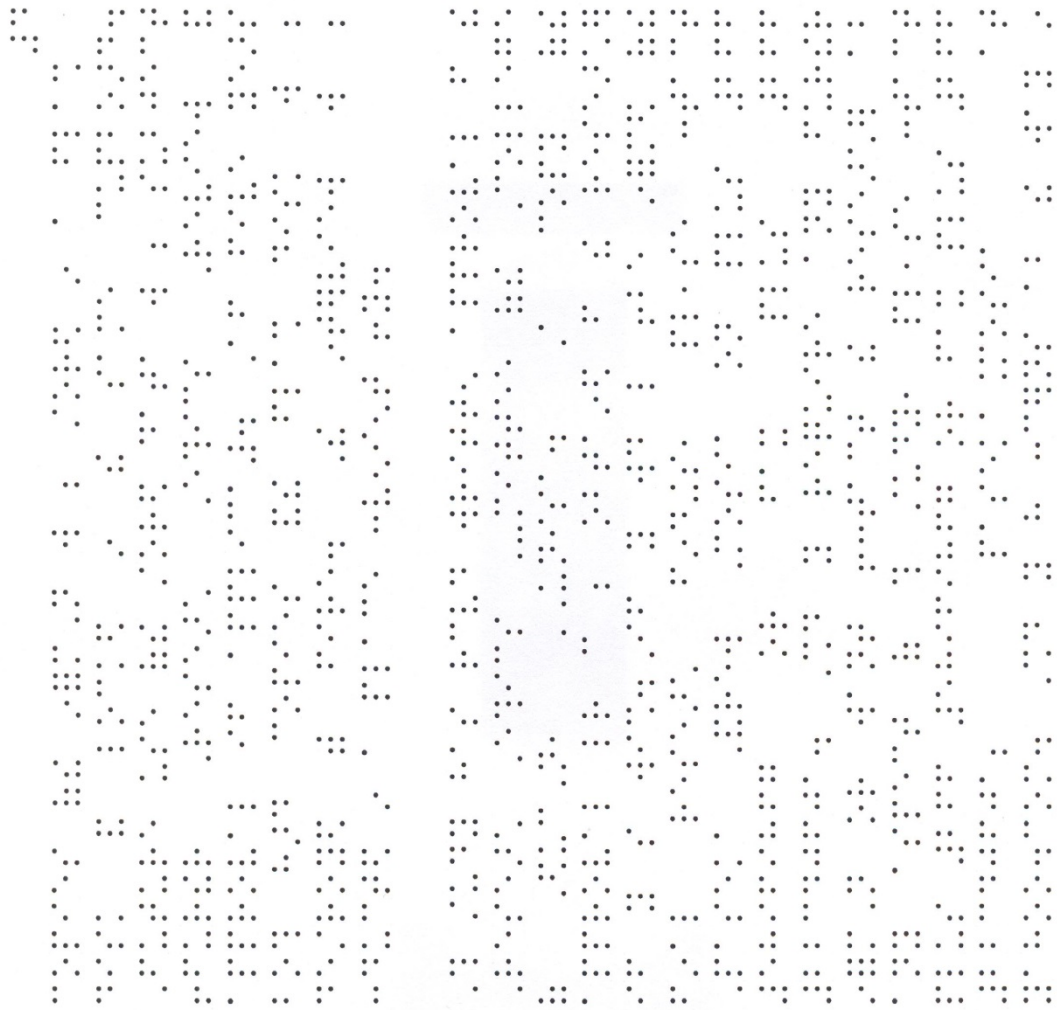
APPENDIX VIII



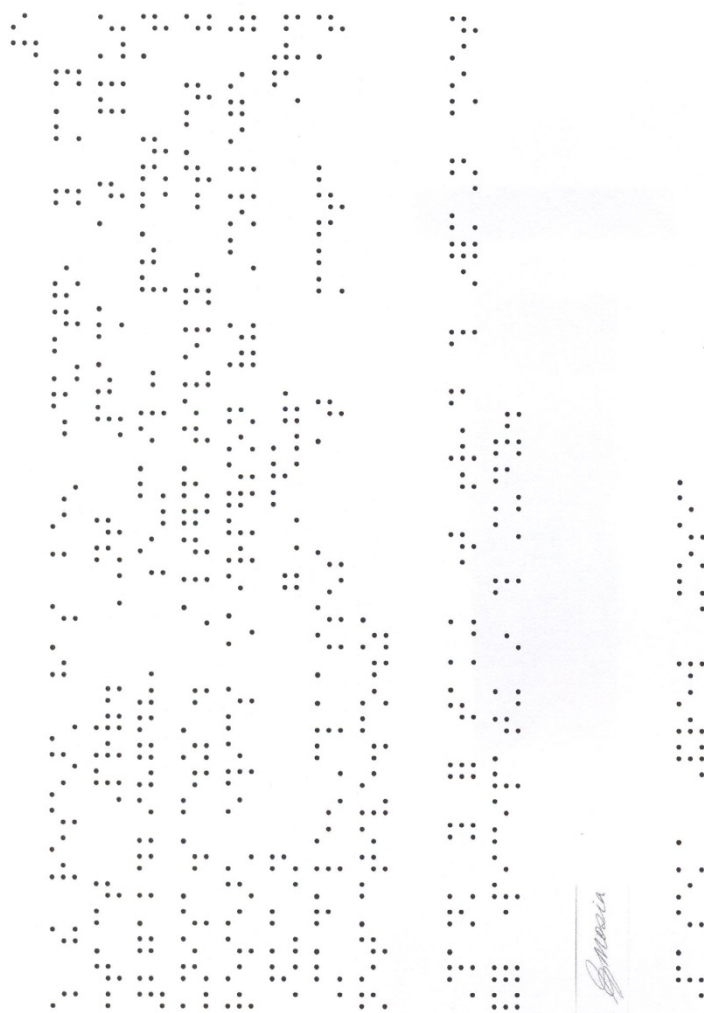
APPENDIX VIII



APPENDIX VIII



APPENDIX VIII



APPENDIX IX

Ref: REG/FOE-4.1

Date: 9th March 2005

Re: Establishment of Special Education Unit

1. At a Consultative Meeting between the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Development Planning Office, a decision was reiterated that as a professional in educational matters, you should establish a Special Unit to;
 - 1.1 Deal with special needs of students including inter alia physically and visually challenged students.
 - 1.2 Focus on any other pertinent special education needs etc.
 - 1.3 to work closely with the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Director of Works for academic and physical matters etc.
 - 1.4 Sort out any logistical matters so that by August 2005 the unit is fully functional.
2. Please therefore set the machinery in motion right away.

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REF: VC/FOE-4.1

DATE: 24 January 2006

RE: FOUNDER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Please refer to our discussions on the above.

As I indicated, I am anxious that the special education programme takes off at the earliest opportunity. For that to happen, I will need a proposal which will include the recommendations on the name and Curriculum Vitae of the Founding Specialist.

As the designated location for the special education programme, I will also be happy to receive a report about your trip to several universities and the discussions on this in the Faculty of Education.

I hope it is not too much to expect all above before the end of the week so that preparations can begin to put this in place.

Thank you.

APPENDIX XI

Dear Sir,



Re: Interim Head of Special Education

This is a follow-up on the brief meeting that you and I had in your office sometime early this month regarding the subject shown above.

It is the Faculty's intention to turn Special Education Unit into a fully fledged department within the Faculty of Education. In order to achieve this purpose, it is essential that this unit should have a Head who is going to monitor its activities and attend to matters relating to its growth. In this way the development of the programme on Special Education can be expedited and benefits realized within a reasonable space of time.

If this idea is acceptable to you Sir, I beg to suggest that *Dr.* _____ be officially appointed as an interim Head of the unit as soon as possible.

I hope that the proposal will meet with your favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX XII

TO: SENATE SECRETARY
FROM: DEAN - FED
CC: INTERIM HEAD – SPECIAL EDUCATION
DATE: 28TH JANUARY, 2009

REQUEST FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

As you may recall, the Special Education Proposal (August 2006) initially suggested that the Special Education Unit be established as a centre within the Faculty of Education (FED). However, we have since been advised by the Special Education Consultant, Prof. _____ in his report on the Establishment of a Special Education Unit/Department of March 2008 (pg.5) that given its nature and number of staff, it is best that it be a department. To this extent the FED requests to establish such a department. We therefore submit this request to you to present it to the relevant bodies.

APPENDIX XIII

REF : REG/ADM-4.1

DATE : 2ND FEBRUARY 2009

RE : REQUEST FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF
A SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

I write to acknowledge receipt of your memorandum dated 28th January 2009, in relation to the above captioned subject.

The format for presentation should be indicated as follows

Purpose

Background : to indicate /attach Prof. [] report

Rationale/Justification/Objectives:

Implications : Financial/Budget
Physical
Staffing

Reporting lines:

Recommendation:

Please note that since establishment of a department is a statutory function, in terms of section 10 (1) of the [] Act as amended the recommendation for Senate will have to go to Council, which will transmit the same to the Minister of Education for onward submission to the Head of State.

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FROM: DEAN - FED
TO: BURSAR
CC: VICE CHANCELLOR
PVC (ai)
DEAN – HUMANITIES
HOD – EDF
TUTOR – YEAR 3
MR _____

DATE: DECEMBER 03, 2014

REQUEST FOR URGENT RESPONSE TO THE PLIGHT OF STUDENT JEREMANE TEELE

The attached letter from student _____ and a memo of September , 2014 from Head of EDF to Bursar bears reference. The Acting Vice Chancellor acceded to the departmental request sometime in October and instructed the Bursary to facilitate acquisition of a computer for Mr R _____ in exchange of his personal one. Subsequently the HOD of EDF and Mr _____ our Special Needs Assistant, kept following up the matter with the procurement office. Unfortunately our efforts were to minimal avail which in our view should have been more prompt, considering that NUL's visually-impaired students cannot have access to lecture material and all their learning needs without the specialize software in Mr _____'s laptop.

The saddest consequence of delayed procurement of the facility is that our visually-challenged student - _____ has fallen victim in that he was not been able to compile his lecture notes for all his first semester course offerings.

APPENDIX XIV

An even more disheartening end result on the part of the Faculty is that it has therefore not been possible for the student to write his first semester examinations. Hence his plea to be granted either an exemption or special examinations”.

You will appreciate that the situation has been emotionally and psychologically traumatic to the student. The Faculty notes with deepest concern that this delay is one of the indicators of institutional compliance with some of the criteria of the accreditation standard on student support.

By this memo your office is desperately requested to treat this matter with utmost urgency and without any further delay avail a computer in exchange of Mr R _____'s as has been approved.